

Perspectives on the
Religious Identity of
Muslims in Britain

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Abstract

The first chapter of this thesis introduces the subject of the research, offers a review of the literature so far available in the area, and outlines the methodology that has been used. The second chapter enters into a detailed and lengthy discussion of the main concepts used in the research, and explores such things as identity, religious identity, and the ideologies that pervade the Western world. Chapter three assesses the history of the Muslim world since the fall of the Ottoman Empire, especially in the light of the 'Western' ideologies outlined in the preceding chapter. The second part of the chapter then considers the migration of Muslims to Britain, and some of the differences in terms of identity between the three generations of British Muslims. Some of these varying identificational patterns are examined in Chapter Four, and the focus of attention is particularly upon the young Muslims in Britain, and some of the effects that plurality and minority status have had upon them. Chapter Five examines how the Muslim community has tried to offer counterbalancing forces to the pressures upon religious identity from the wider society through different institutions and services. The concluding chapter offers an overview of the research and picks out the most poignant observations that have been reached.

DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed.....Candidate

Date.....

STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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Supervisor

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To

Nadeem, and those of his generation

CHAPTER ONE

Chapter One - Introduction

1.1. Preliminary Comments

This research aims to explore the possible effects of pluralism on religious identity, with particular reference to the Muslim community in Britain. Though identity is a matter of concern for many individuals and faith groups, implicitly or explicitly, this study focuses specifically on the religious identity issues of concern to British Muslims. Hopefully however, much of the discussion that follows will highlight a wider perspective on the subject of identity that will be of interest beyond the confines of a specific religious group.

Islam in Britain has been chosen as the focus for this study for a number of reasons. Firstly, the way of life prescribed by Islam is especially comprehensive in its scope. There are numerous dimensions in the life of a Muslim that may be affected by living in a context of diversity. Secondly, the history of Muslim presence in Britain is such that some comparisons may now be made between the religious identity of first generation immigrants mainly originating from Pakistan, and the young generation of Muslims born and brought up in Britain's atmosphere of ideological diversity. There are likely to be some considerable differences in their expression of religious orientation, which can be attributed to the milieu of pluralism which prevails in Britain.

Tackling identity issues amid the climate of cultural, ethnic, ideological and religious pluralism seems to be of great importance for young Muslims (1). As Edward Said noted in his penultimate 1993 Reith Lecture, "the fundamental problem is therefore how to reconcile one's identity and the actualities of one's own culture, society and history to the reality of other identities, cultures, peoples" (2). Perhaps unlike their parents, Muslim youth have realized, "this can never be done simply by asserting one's preference for what is already one's own: tub-thumping about the glories of 'our' culture or the triumphs of 'our' history.....especially not today when so many societies are composed of different races and backgrounds as to

beggar any reductive formulas" (3). Young Muslims are perhaps taking this approach to heart, and are aware of the need to find their identity amid the different religious and cultural orientations of others.

Many people today live in the context of modernity out of which pluralism in many forms arises. Little research appears to have been done on the potential consequences of this to religious identity and consciousness. The literature review in the second section of this chapter will however illustrate something of what has been published to date on this subject. While there is a wealth of information and statistical data surrounding the facts and figures of such things as secularization and pluralism, much of this has been confined to studies relating to Christianity. Leslie Francis is one Christian scholar who has produced numerous statistical surveys which chart the changes to Christian practice caused by secularism (4). Such studies are important of course in order to identify social changes and trends; but so too is exploration into the subtleties that lie behind the facts and figures, particularly in relation to new religious communities in Britain, such as Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs. This study attempts to examine some of the key issues and developments within the Muslim community in Britain that have arisen due to its social setting in a plural and secular society, and especially where these have some bearing on the concept of identity in general and religious identity in particular.

To this end, consideration must be given to the literature that exists so far which will form the theoretical basis for the research.

1.2. Literature Review

It is important at this stage to outline the material that has been written to date on issues of religious identity. Consideration will be given to the contributions of academics who have written about religious identity in general, those who have considered it in relation to Jewish and Christian communities, and finally, the nature of contributions that deal with the Islamic community in particular.

'Religious Identity' appears to be a term widely used, but rarely defined or discussed in detail within the field of religious studies. Passing references may be made to the *identity* of a religious believer, or the *identity* of a community, but this is infrequently backed up by a precise explanation of the term. For example, Muhammad Anwar begins his article on 'Religious Identity in Plural Societies: The Case of Britain' with nothing more than a brief mention of the constituents of identity...

"in a pluralistic society ethnic minority groups desire and need to keep their cultural identity (religious practices, distinguishing patterns of family relationships, mother-tongue and other aspects)" (5).

Similarly, Paul Weller's examination of the Rushdie affair and multiculturalism mentions the importance of religious identity, but does not go on to define religious identity precisely.

"In a cultural milieu where ethnicity, nationality, class, and fashion have been seen as the major determining factors of individual and corporate identity, for a group to define itself primarily in terms of religious identity represents a major break with the prevailing social ethos...(and)...with the growing assertion of Islamic identity, unless "*the powers that be*" learn to deal with people as they define themselves, social disintegration will indeed be the inevitable result" (6).

Detailed attention then on what religious identity as a concept might be referring to, has largely been outside of the scope of many writers addressing issues raised by the Muslim presence in Britain.

"Usually, the term is used without explanation as if it were obvious what it means; and, indeed, faddish as the word has become, it has also come to mean to many something both profound and unfathomable" (7).

One of the earliest pieces of scholarship on identity came from William James (8), a psychologist and philosopher, at the turn of the century. His work is important for this research, since it is perhaps from the foundations of William James that more recent studies of identity and religious identity have their basis and have subsequently developed. However, much of his writing was devoted to vast fields within psychology, religion (9), and philosophy, with only relatively little

attention to the precise interests of this research. Therefore, only a brief introduction will be given to James' work, and only that which illustrates how his thought had a springboard effect in initiating and grounding later scholarship in the investigation of identity.

For James, identity is about...

"personal sameness...either as a subjective phenomenon or as an objective deliverance, as a feeling, or as a truth. This sense of personal identity is the sense of a sameness perceived *by* thought and predicated of things *thought-about*" (10).

It is the stream of feelings experienced by an individual that make up the sense of identity. But this is part of a much wider consciousness of the self. This self has as its facets (a) its constituents; (b) the feelings and emotions that arise from the self and (c) the behaviour that results. This all-encompassing view of what makes up a person gave later scholars a broad basis from which to work. In recognizing that an individual is made-up from a material/physical self; a social self; a spiritual self; and the pure Ego, James identified some of the foundations from which a developing identity can emerge. It is perhaps our loss that he did not further combine his work in the fields of religion and psychology to produce a comprehensive analysis of religious identity.

Following on from the work of William James, a key scholar of 'identity' is Erik Erikson. Much of his work as a psychologist has been devoted to study and writing about this term (11). He is concerned to take the idea of identity beyond the simple question 'Who am I?'. Rather, he approaches the concept in a far wider perspective, as more of a psychosocial phenomenon. It then takes on personal/individual and collective connotations. A complete analysis of all Erikson's work would be inappropriate for this section of the research. But he has written much that is relevant to a deeper understanding of 'religious identity'. Furthermore, many scholars of the latter phenomenon have relied upon Erikson's concepts in order to derive their definitions. Thus, Erikson's scholarship merits a brief consideration at this point.

A sense of personal identity relies upon a feeling of "sameness and continuity as an individual" (12) suggests Erikson. But identity must take account of a sense of belonging to a community, whose values and norms begin to have significance for a growing person. It is particularly during adolescence that the new generation demand an identity from the community. It is through their energies, and the "confirmation of their identities, that societies are regenerated, (and)...In its individual and collective aspects, psychosocial identity strives for ideological unity" (13). In these two sentences, Erikson has stated something of profound importance for this study. He forces us to consider the possible implications of pluralism on identity, and the ambiguous identity that might result from the generations of young people growing up in society who appear to be constructing new identities amid this plurality. The notion of 'identity crisis' becomes relevant here, referring to a time when identity might change for the better or for the worse. Erikson provides us with a framework to analyze this in relation to the contemporary social situation, particularly in its recognition of the "complementarity and relativity of individual identity and collective ideology" (14).

Erikson has written about identity in relation to race relations (15). Although addressed mainly towards issues of relevance for the Negro American, much of his terminology remains valid for consideration of other racial/ethnic groups. He begins his paper with a powerful quotation from R.P Warren...

"I seize the word *identity*. It is a key word. You hear it over and over again. On this word will focus, around this word will coagulate, a dozen issues, shifting, shading into each other. Alienated from the world to which he is born and from the country of which he is a citizen, yet surrounded by the successful values of that world, and country, how can the Negro define himself?" (16)

In numerous societies we find ethnic/racial groups (particularly among their young) who feel neither a part of their parent culture, nor fully belonging to the wider society around them. Unable to identify fully with the ethos of either worldviews raises many questions, not least the one raised by Warren...how to define oneself? Out of this dilemma, Erikson uses some particular concepts, such as

'surrendered identity', and 'negative identity' (17) with which to characterize the problem and its dynamics, and thus he gives us a language with which to work.

Erikson is aware that discussion of identity and race-relations is likely to bring with it a religious element, especially for youth "for future over-all issues of identity will include the balance within man of technological strivings and ethnical and ultimate concerns" (18). Erikson gives the impression that as youth seek to find confirmation for their identities, the spiritual dimension will be recognised in the process, at least by most youths. The essentially secular environment of scientific progress will not prevent them from trying to seek inner balance and harmony between the material and spiritual. Erikson's suggestions here appear to be born out by the prolific amount of writing today by members of many religious/ethnic groups concerned with religious identity. It is perhaps this particular strand of Erikson's thought, concerned specifically with ethnic-religious identity, that is taken up in more detail by Hans Mol. This will be considered shortly.

Jonathan Glover appears to bridge the gap between psychology and religion in his book, *'I: The Philosophy and Psychology of Personal Identity'* (19), especially in his chapter which considers how beliefs go some way towards how a person may define him or herself. Often when asked to offer a self-description, a person will place central religious or other ideological belief at the heart of the picture. In this way, "beliefs can be part of the self we have created" (20). Everything possible is done to support this particular picture from amongst a number of other ones, since the individual is defending not only beliefs, but the self-portrait these beliefs support. This touches upon the crux of the thesis: the effect of awareness of many potentially conflicting beliefs upon identificational beliefs.

Hans Mol has devoted much of his attention to the meaning of identity in relation to religion. The titles of several of his books betray his interest in the term...*'Identity and the Sacred'* and *'Identity and Religion'* (21). Mol approaches the issue of identity from the standpoint of a sociologist of religion. But while social

psychologists emphasise identity in relation to the interaction of roles between actors, Mol chooses to concentrate instead on the "stable settings in which these exchanges can successfully take place, and (this is) by definition more enduring than a galaxy of roles" (22). Mol has most affinity with scholars such as David de Levita (23), Robert Bellah (24), or Allen Wheelis (25), who, like him, think of identity more as "the most essential nucleus of man which becomes visible only after all his roles have been laid aside" (26).

Mol's analysis of the role of religion in relation to identity begins with an investigation of previous writing on the subject. In his early overview of various approaches to the question of identity, Mol turns his attention to the contribution of psychologists such as William James (27), and Erik Erikson (28). He then considers the comments of other sociologists of religion such as Robert N. Bellah (29). As Mol's ideas unfold, he explains in detail the human need for identity, the meaning of the term, the foci for identity, and the means whereby identity may be established through religion. All these aspects that make up Mol's thesis are relevant to the establishment of a working definition of 'religious identity' for this study. Deeper consideration of the intricacies of his framework will thus appear in the following chapter.

In his capacity as editor of *'Identity and Religion'*, Mol has put together a useful set of empirical studies that explore identity from a worldwide perspective. A key question characterizes most of the contributions: what part does religion play in reinforcing identity? The twelve chapters each focus upon this issue in relation to a specific cultural situation, whether it be the Lubavitcher Chassidics in Canada or the Maoris of New Zealand (30). One paper is of particular relevance for the concerns of this study since it examines identity and pluralism in particular. Taking the form of a case study based on the history of the minority Dutch Catholics in the Netherlands, Jan Thurlings develops some important theoretical points. In particular, he suggests that "minority behaviour will result from, on the one hand, the group's desire to keep its identity intact and from, on the other hand, its willingness to assimilate with the

majority" (31). Some of the relevant factors in the minority situation are, as Thurlings suggests...

"the degree to which the group in question feels itself *relevantly different* from its environment, (and) the degree to which this group feels threatened by the environment. Out of the confrontation of perceived difference and perceived threat will result a certain type of attitude. The *specific* type of attitude chosen by members of the minority group will have something to do with the degree to which they think their identity is relevantly different from their environment and with the degree to which they feel threatened by it" (32).

Thurlings' paper offers us a useful tool to consider identity and pluralism, especially in his analysis of patterns of behaviour - such as militancy, defensiveness, or submissiveness - that serve as indicators of identity structure.

While Hans Mol appears to be the only sociologist of religion who has considered the concept of 'religious identity' in detail, there are numerous other scholars who have discussed some of the factors outlined by Mol as important for religious identity. Bryan Wilson (33), Meredith McGuire (34), Peter Berger (35), Joachim Wach (36), and Kim Knott (37), to name but a few sociologists of religion, have each made a contribution to understanding such things as 'belonging' and 'commitment' in relation to religious communities.

Bryan Wilson's *Religion in Sociological Perspective* consists of a series of essays examining various themes: the sociology of sects, New Religious Movements, secularization, and, of particular relevance for this study, a chapter dealing with the functions of religion in contemporary society. He notes some of the obvious roles that religion plays in people's lives, such as offering a system of salvation and psychological reassurance. He suggests that one of the latent functions of religion is the conferring of identity. "Religion answered the question 'Who am I?' for individuals and 'Who are we?' for groups" (38). But he regards religion to have lost its latter role, with only *individuals* as able, in a world of essentially secular nation states, to find "reinforcement of their self-conceptions from religious sources" (39). Wilson does not really define precisely what he means by identity, adding only a footnote directing the reader towards the

work of Hans Mol. Furthermore, at times it appears that Wilson uses the notion of identity interchangeably with the idea of religion as conferring a set of values. Identity is perhaps about much more than simply values. Wilson's book is nevertheless useful; it offers an overview of the nature of belief in modern society, especially as a result of secularization. This makes a more detailed examination of his work valuable for the following chapter, and in particular, we must assess whether his suggestion that religion no longer confers identity on groups is evident.

Kim Knott has contributed to the literature on religion and identity in her paper that was presented at the International Association for the History of Religions congress in Sydney in 1985 (40). She begins her paper with the important observation that..."if we consider religion, identity and ethnicity, and the vast quantity of research and writing that has been undertaken on each we may be surprised when we find, if we take the three together, a relative scarcity of published material" (41). The importance of her paper then is that it identifies and reviews those papers and books that do examine these three together.

One scholar whom she cites is Arnold Dashefsky (42) who has attempted to describe the identity of religio-ethnic groups. But as Knott notes, he did not give prominence to religious beliefs or practices in his study. Nor does he give an "account of the particular role of religion or the effects on religion of religio-ethnic identity" (43). Knott's literature review goes on to highlight the particular value of Hans Mol's work, and, although the studies of Muhammad Anwar (44) will be discussed shortly, it is worth noting at this point Knott's recognition of his work in examining religion, identity and ethnicity. His paper on 'Religious Identity in Plural Societies: the case of Britain' (45) is regarded by Knott as...

"refreshing because it is one of the few pieces of research which puts religion squarely at the centre of discussion....he takes seriously the pressures, caused by migration and the new location, which are brought to bear on Muslim religious identity...he considers this identity and attempts to characterize its history and development by asking questions of the old and the young" (46).

The literature dealing with identity, ethnicity and religion is complicated in that different weight is given, according to the perspective of the scholar, to each of these three concepts. Different treatments accord varying significance to the relationships between them. Knott takes a particularly 'Religious Studies' approach to identity in that the religious dimension is given prominence while still giving considerable attention to factor of ethnicity for minority faith groups in Britain (47). The value of Knott's paper lies in its recognition that identity issues for 'minority' faith groups in Britain deserve the attention of academics in the field of religious studies research.

Meredith McGuire has given detailed consideration to the particularly social nature of religion (48); her work serves to highlight many of those aspects of religion which confer identity. McGuire discusses such things as the nature of ritual, the religious community and belonging, commitment, religious organizations, rites of passage, and cohesion and conflict caused by religion. Where Hans Mol discusses such aspects in their particular role as conferring identity, McGuire examines them in a broader and more general perspective. This makes her work of particular value then for a deeper and more critical assessment of Mol's use of these concepts. An examination in more detail of McGuire's definitions and contribution to an understanding the dynamics of religious identity is offered in the following chapter.

Joachim Wach's *Sociology of Religion* (49), though published back in 1944, remains one of the 'classics' in the sociological study of religion. In particular he analyses the relationship between religion and society; but not without first underpinning his study with some assessment of some of those aspects of religion which, according to Mol, contribute to the development of religious identity. For example, Wach goes behind some of the terminology used by Mol, giving us a deeper understanding of such things as myth and doctrine...both of which contribute to the development of a religious identity. Wach writes...

"the *content* of the intellectual expression of religious experiences revolves about three topics of particular importance - God, the world, and man. In other words, theological, cosmological, and anthropological conceptions are continuously being evolved in terms of myth, doctrine, and dogma" (50).

Wach seems to take the reader back to first principles in offering an understanding of religion. Having looked at religious experience and the doctrines and myths that arise from it, Wach goes on to examine the practical outworking of these myths. It is the theoretical formulations of the faith which go on to determine the patterns for liturgy and action. Arising out of the shared performance of rituals, the social aspect of religion can be seen; the phrase 'Unus Christianus, nullus Christianus' - one Christian is no Christian - applies in some sense to all religions, Wach suggests (51).

He goes on to make a particularly important observation of relevance to this study regarding the general trend in the West, observed since the end of the 19th century, of greater individualism in religion. Though of course there may be exceptions to this case, in general there has been for example, an advance of Protestant Christianity over Catholicism. Wach suggests that this trend occurs due to a..."gradual emancipation of the individual from the influence of his cultural and social background and a continuous process of differentiation within the civilization itself" (52). The impact of individualism among young Muslims in Britain will be explored later in this thesis.

Also for a following chapter is a consideration of changes in the nature of belief within the Muslim community in Britain. It will be argued that young Muslims are not only breaking away from some of their cultural heritage and traditional mores, but are also confronting the ideologically differentiated society in which they find themselves. It is possible to identify a greater individualism amongst young Muslims than evident within older generations. The implications of this for religious identity will be considered, i.e., where does the group, sect, or institution fit into more individual patterns of belief and practice?

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, both separately and in joint publications (53), offer a framework for identifying how identities are constructed and maintained from a social perspective: through religious institutions; roles; legitimation systems, and so on. Religion offers various techniques for 'reality-maintenance' in order to legitimate the social world and the place of humankind within it. Religious identity, in their thought, is perhaps the strongest form of identity since "religious legitimations ground the socially defined reality of institutions in the ultimate reality of the universe" (54).

Identity is grounded in social processes according to Berger and Luckmann. It is through social interaction in particular that identity finds its basis, and in particular through the production of signs, gestures, routines, and so on. The institutionalization of shared patterns of meaning is the starting point for Berger and Luckmann in the development of institutions. These possess a body of transmitted knowledge and beliefs which define and construct roles, and thus identity for the members of such institutions. The authors briefly mention the relationships between institutions (such as religious organizations), and the problem of legitimation in a climate of pluralism. They consider the dilemmas that may arise when there is no single plausibility structure to maintain a definition of reality. But they spend little time considering the effect on *identity* of such pluralism in general terms, or in specifically religious contexts. Peter Berger does not go much beyond saying...

"in a social situation in which everyone with whom the individual has significant ties is a soldier, it is not surprising that the soldier's view of the world, with all that this implies, will be massively plausible. Conversely it is difficult to be a soldier in a social situation where this makes little or no sense to everyone else" (55).

In other words, there are likely to be implications in terms of religious identity for a Muslim living in Britain. To be in a social setting where the majority of the population understand very little about the beliefs and practices of Islam (56) may jeopardize the plausibility of it for some Muslims. There is no social legitimacy given to Islamic values, beliefs, and norms in the wider society.

Before leaving this overview of writing on 'religious identity' in general, it is important to note that the notion has been used widely in relation to studies of conversion. Since religious conversion involves a change of religious identity, many authors have considered these two phenomenon together. But their approach to religious identity appears to be biased, naturally perhaps, by a psychological definition of identity. Authors such as Virgil Gillespie (57) follow in the Eriksonian tradition for their theoretical basis for identity. But this can nevertheless provide a balance to the largely sociological approach to identity that characterizes the material surveyed so far.

Moving on from writings on religious identity in general, a timely point has now been reached to briefly survey material on the subject in relation to specific faith communities, and an examination of Judaism will be the starting point. Consideration will be given to Islam in particular a little later.

There have been a whole range of books and papers written on the subject of Jewish identity, both in relation to British Jews and those abroad (58). Out of the vast array of literature, it would seem helpful to pick out various themes that emerge which serve as a useful background to a study of Islamic identity in Britain. These include: religious pluralism and identity, education and identity, and the lessons of British Judaism for Muslims in Britain.

Sol Roth in his paper in the journal *Judaism*, asks a crucial question facing a religious community. "Is religious pluralism a problem or a solution"? (59). He notes the fact of intra-religious diversity within the American Jewish community, which is viewed both positively and negatively by different Jews. But above the variant attitudes, there remains the question as to whether unity (seen as an almost indispensable condition of Jewish survival) can be preserved in a communal context of pluralism and diversity.

Roth traces the pluralistic character of the Jewish community to certain historical facts...the destruction of the Temple, and the absence among Jews of a "universally recognised central authority" (60). Such conditions paved the way for pluralism, and perhaps less

positively, hostility and envy. Like Judaism, Islam has its own history of division, and to this day there is no universally recognised central authority in Islam either worldwide, or in Britain. But despite differences between Jewish groups, Roth suggests that intra-religious pluralism is a feasible arrangement provided that ...

"each recognises the Jewish identity of the other. Since Classical Judaism separates the question of identity from commitment, pluralism can exist in Jewish life in the context of a unity derived from the perception that, notwithstanding a diversity of commitments, all in the pluralistic community are Jews" (61).

Can a similar argument be developed for British Muslims whereby the legitimacy of differing Islamic identities are affirmed? Roth is putting forward a challenging suggestion..."the urgent and indispensable task is to convince all segments of the Jewish community to adopt perceptions and to preserve pluralistic arrangements in which unity can be achieved" (62).

Turning the focus away from pluralism, Aaron Lor considers the 'Quest for Jewish Identity in a Changing Social Milieu' (63) with particular reference to education. His paper is of particular relevance since the education system may be considered as a key institution for the formation and maintenance of identity. Again, his discussion, like Roth's, is centred around the American scene. Lor notes that one of the key motivating forces behind Jewish parents sending their children to Jewish schools is due to "a yearning for ethnic identity (and) growing stress on the meaningful continuity of Jewish tradition" (64). He suggests that there are certain questions that the Jewish community should be tackling.."How to make these books (the Pentateuch, the Talmud etc.) the permanent property for future generations, how to transmit the content of the books in an educational setting which will be conducive for religious growth and intense Jewish identity, are largely questions which educators, rabbis, and lay leaders of the American Jewish community have to grapple with seriously" (65). The over-riding sentiment that emerges from Lor's article is that formal Jewish education is the essential forum, along with synagogues, and Jewish family life, for the successful transmission of Jewish identity for future generations

living in America's plural society. He also highlights the importance of texts and personnel for the transmission and preservation of religious identity.

"What light does the Jewish experience shed on the idea of a multi-cultural Britain"? This is the question that Peter Bishop seeks to answer in his paper of this title (66). He seeks to show how many practical and social issues faced by immigrant Jews at the turn of the century are of closely paralleled by Muslim immigrants who arrived in Britain during the 1960's. One of these issues is that of preserving religious identity amid a climate of pluralism.

Bishop points out that Jews appeared to the indigenous white population as threatening in terms of their cultural differences. They wore different clothes, spoke a different language, ate different food, married largely within their own communities, professed a different religion, and had different cultural tastes. Numerous outward symbols were used to mark off the in-group from the out-group. But despite differences, some positive themes emerge from Bishop's paper.

"Jews have come to be regarded as a model of successful accommodation to British society. Members of more recently arrived groups have been advised by their leaders to 'emulate the Jews', and have often seen the Jews as examples of how to preserve a distinct religion and culture whilst being successful in British society. Muhammad Anwar commented..."It is interesting to note that while there is a lot of covert hostility by Muslims towards Jews their success in preserving their religion and culture is held up as an example by many Muslims in this country"" (67).

It is questionable whether the Jews are a good example for Muslims in this case. It is possible that Jews have used their history of suffering and persecution to their own ends. This may explain in part their general acceptance into British society. There is another essential difference between Muslims and Jews. Unlike Jews, Muslims do not form a monolithic racial group. The ethnicity of the Islamic community is diverse world-wide. Jews may use their racial similarities as a further means to strengthen their identity. Furthermore, unlike most Muslims, Jews are perhaps not generally

considered as an 'ethnic minority' or 'coloured' like Asians or Afro-Caribbeans. Further, Jews arrived into Britain at a different point in history. They perhaps had less to contend with; political events in the rest of the world can determine the kind of treatment that a minority community receive. Over the past thirteen years or so, the Muslim world has rarely been out of the media spotlight. Often it has been characterized as a socio-political threat. Whether it be the Iranian Revolution, the Rushdie affair, terrorist activities in the Middle East, or the Honeyford case, such events may make it difficult for Muslim communities to be accepted into British society.

As one might expect, the question of Christian religious identity has received its fair share of academic investigation. Again, rather than giving an overview of the enormity of literature, it would seem more useful to survey specific writings on the subject which might have relevance for Muslims in Britain.

Leslie Francis has conducted numerous statistical studies which attempt to outline issues of religious identity (68). His investigation into denominational identity amongst eleven year olds appears to indicate the importance of parental religious identity if children are themselves to adopt a personal Christian identity. He also tries to show what differences there are (in terms of behaviour, home background and attitudes) between those children who claim religious identity and those who do not. His findings indicate that identification with the smallest denominational group in a sample brings with it a stronger commitment to religious practice than identifying with the other, larger denominational groups. It is possible that this tells us something about the religious identity of minority groups. Small religious groups perhaps demand greater allegiance than larger ones in order that the identity of the group is maintained. Francis' work, although thorough, frequently uses the word 'identity' in relation to religion without precise definition of the term.

In addressing issues of 'Schooling, Identity and Denominationalism' in America, Ronald Goodenow is confronting questions that go beyond the scope of America in particular (69). Many Western industrial

nations are having to deal with multiculturalism, a diversity of denominations, and the fragmentation of society due to differences of race and religious orientation. Amid this situation parents are demanding the maintenance of specific cultural and religious identities in their children. Goodenow addresses the question with a specific focus upon Roman Catholic education. He suggests that many Catholic parents see as the key to survival a school system that maintains Catholic values and discipline in a society undergoing rapid social change. However, he also notes the strong support for Catholic schools among non-Catholics, paralleling the opinion of many Muslim parents that a good Christian school is the best option open to them in view of limited 'Muslim' schools. In the midst of pluralism and cultural diversity, Goodenow's paper echoes the sentiments of Jews in stressing the importance of denominational education for the transmission of religious and cultural identity.

At this point, attention must be given more specifically to literature concerning Muslims in Britain and issues of religious identity. To begin this task, it would be useful to breakdown some of the key areas into which literature on this subject falls. In the main writing in relation to Muslims and religious identity addresses issues relating to: the history of Muslim presence in Britain (70); the Rushdie affair (71); education of Britain's Muslim youth (72); the nature of Islamic identity both in Britain and abroad (73); relationships between the different generations of Muslims (74); the problems faced by Muslim women and girls (75); the relationship between the British Muslim minority and the *ummah* (76); the history and demography of Pakistanis in Britain (77); general statistical surveys of Muslims in Britain (78); immigration and identity (79); issues for the acculturation of Muslim youth (80); Islamic sects in Britain, such as the Ismaili's (81); Pakistani ethnicity (82); Bangladeshis in Britain (83); observance of *purdah* (84); Muslim relations with Christians (85); cultural problems faced by Muslims (86); British Islam and the Gulf War (87); the Muslim Parliament of Great Britain (88); Islam and Secularism (89); Bengali Muslims (90); Muslim supplementary schools (91); studies of specific Muslim communities (92); and one paper by Muhammad Anwar on Islam, Identity and Pluralism (93). This list is not exhaustive of course, and literature surrounding Islam in Britain

is growing as each day passes. But the list gives some idea of the spectrum of material currently available.

Two distinct types of literature have emerged over the past thirty years. Especially in the 1960's and 1970's, treatment of Muslims was confined to examination by sociologists concerned in particular with issues of multiracialism and integration (94). This gave their work a particularly psycho-social backdrop at the expense of the more religious concerns which underpinned the life of the new immigrant communities. Perhaps to counteract this, from the early 1980's a new kind of literature has emerged - produced by the members of faith communities themselves (95). The Muslim community has produced a number of authors which seek to explain the beliefs and practices of Islam to both Muslims and non-Muslims alike. But for the purposes of this research, attention must concentrate more specifically on material available to date on Islam in Britain that is relevant to the aims of the project.

Perhaps one of the most significant early pieces of research on the Pakistani Muslim community in Britain was conducted by Verity Saifullah-Khan (96) in the early 1970's. Her study sought to compare the lifecycles of Mirpuri villagers in Mirpur, Pakistan, and in Bradford. She examines various factors such as housing, social networks and interaction, and employment in both places. A case-study of a Mirpuri couple who had migrated to Britain adds some concrete illustrations for her research. She gives considerable attention to how values, beliefs and norms operate in both contexts, and in particular, how they have been affected by the migration process. Throughout the thesis, Saifullah-Khan shows an awareness of the Mirpuri's identity as Muslims. The pressures that are brought to bear on this identity as a result of living in Britain are considered. Her study is particularly valuable in that many of the psychological attitudes, expectations, and pressures that a villager in Pakistan and a Muslim in Bradford may experience are outlined.

Her work provides a reference point to which scholars can look back to examine the significant changes that have taken place within the Pakistani Muslim community in Britain. In the early 1970's, many

Mirpuris still lived with the 'myth of return' to their homeland, and this is evident in the thesis. Their psychological orientation was still geared towards re-establishing a life back in Pakistan, and this affected the way they saw their social interactions and future goals. In the end, many of them did not settle back in Pakistan, so that for them and for their children who have been born and educated in Britain, the future lies very much here. Saifullah-Khan's study draws a picture of a collection of Muslim communities in Bradford feeling that the whole scheme of orientation which directs their lives and gives them meaning is under threat. The 'host' community does not share their social, religious, and ethical values. In general, feelings of insecurity arise for many members of the migrant community. But now that one, or even two generations have been through the British education system, and as ties with Pakistan weaken, the younger members of the community appear to have a different attitude to members of the 'out-group' than their parents. Saifullah-Khan's study allows us to identify where the essential differences are by comparing her findings with more recent scholarship.

One year previously to Saifullah-Khan's study, Peter Reed submitted an M.Phil. thesis on *Moslem Adolescent Boys in Batley* (97). His data includes both quantitative as well as qualitative material. Of prime importance for this study, he offers some assessment of the identity issues of relevance for the young Muslim boys he studied. Unfortunately 'identity' is not defined, and religious identity is subsumed under the general heading of ethnic identity. Despite this however, Reed does emphasise the particular way in which Islam and its observance featured in the identificational landscape of his subjects. He noted how such things as 'community' operate to give an "anchor for identity" (98), and how many of the boys used Islam as a means to identify themselves and their social group - even if their actual observance of Islam was minimal (99). Since Reed's study is essentially about second generation adolescents, many of his reflections provide a reference point for comparison between the identity of the second generation and the current third generation. He gives an impression of the adolescents as holding two meaningful identities; one of these is 'ethnic', and the other relates more to their

general identity as teenagers in British society. In many ways these two identificational sources can accommodate to each other. But where there is a clash of values or practices, the boys erred towards preserving their ethnic (or religious) identity. In terms of community norms, "overt deviancy in crucial areas still seem(ed) to be generally absent" (100). The community in Batley was marked by its own internal pluralism, containing Gujeratis from India and Africa, as well as Pakistanis. Reed found that these differences in origin had little significance for the boys he studied and that "for all immigrant boys, the crucial dimension in their ethnic identity is their religious identity" (101). This extended also to a lack of concern among the boys for the internal (and largely ethnic) differences of the various Muslim groups and mosques in Batley.

It appears that the school context reinforced the separate Muslim identity of the boys. Assemblies in which they could not fully participate, and separate school meals emphasized social as well as religious divisions. Furthermore, the actual differences in terms of colour and ethnicity between the English boys and the Muslims reinforced the group identity of the immigrant group.

Reed's study is particularly interesting in terms of the language he uses to describe the boys and their lives. He talks of them as from an 'immigrant' group, and the boys themselves occasionally used this term to identify themselves. Later on in this research it will be evident that the third generation appear to no longer identify themselves in any way as 'immigrants'. While national origins played little part in the boys perception of themselves in Reed's study, for many young Muslims today, it appears that their identity as 'British Muslims' is important. That they can positively ascribe a British national identity to themselves contrasts with the boys in the Batley study for whom nationality seemed unimportant. However, for many boys in Reed's study, their mother-tongue language was considered an essential dimension of their ethnic identity, and many of them used Gujerati or Urdu to communicate with each other. As we might expect, for the 'British Muslims' of the third generation, it appears that English is now the predominant language medium for communication.

Reed looked beyond the particular era of Islam in Britain which the study traced, and offered some predictions for the future. He noted that a process of acculturation was beginning to occur, and as a consequence of this, there was some degree of secularization within the community. Despite a trend towards lessening observance of Islam, religion nonetheless remained of crucial importance as an identity construct for the boys. Reed notes...

"where ethnic values attach no particular significance to certain practices, pastimes or behaviour, Moslem boys appear increasingly to be adopting the attitudes, and values of their English peers. Moslem adolescents may already be inclining towards a pattern of pluralism as a response to their situation - wanting to participate in the wider society, mix with English people and adapt to English customs and behaviour to a certain degrees, but also wanting to retain an ethnic identity and community" (102).

Reed suggested that the prospects for religious identity becoming stronger in the third generation after the acculturation of the second generation are too difficult to predict. It is on such a point that this study will in some ways bring Reed's work up-to-date.

Muhammad S. Raza (103) has produced perhaps the most recent comprehensive publication that tackles issues such as leadership in the Muslim community in Britain, Westernization and Muslim youth, and the place for Islam in this country. So many issues and events have been of significance for Britain's Muslims that it seemed to Raza that such a book was a matter of "urgency...(to) set the record straight" (104). The late 1980's and early 1990's saw various happenings in the world - the Rushdie affair, the Gulf War - which resulted in a higher, and perhaps negative profile for the Muslim community in Britain in the light of these international affairs.

Raza concentrates his study upon the issues of particular concern for the Indo-Pakistani communities in Britain. The overall aim is to "provide the reader with little or no knowledge with a cognitive map reflecting a general picture of the Muslim community in Britain at the present time, (by) pulling together the major trends of opinion" (105). One of Raza's key theoretical aims was to find out how

Muslims in Britain endeavour to live as a religious group in a secular context. He begins by briefly examining how Muslims fit into the class structure of Britain. They are a divided community economically and socially, and also in terms of sectarianism. With regard to the latter, Raza notes that this is essentially due to an identity crisis in the community. Faced with numerous secular pressures, Muslims of different regional backgrounds and sectarian persuasions have stressed even more these allegiances. To highlight these to the outside world, various symbols of identity, such as 'Islamic' clothing, beads, and beards have been used by some. For those that rely on these outer symbols of identity, other members of the community who do not conform to their image of what a Muslim should look like may be regarded as less than Islamic (106). It is the reactive behaviour of some that betrays their insecurity with Britain's secular society. Raza's realistic and critical analysis of the Muslim community offers a warning to Muslims, and an explanation to non-Muslims of the more reactive behaviour of some sections of the Islamic population.

Raza squarely faces the problems of the community, some of which he puts down to the divided leadership of inadequate imams who have failed to meet the needs of young Muslims in particular. By outlining many possibilities for making a more dynamic and participationist community one feels Raza will be preaching to the converted. He is perhaps one of many relatively younger Muslim commentators who is waiting for the "older generation (that) lives in a world of its own" (107) to pass away before implementing positive changes.

With the education system as a key identity-forming institution, and since it is an issue high on the British Muslim agenda, we find not surprisingly that Raza gives consideration to this matter. The hidden curriculum is of great concern to many Muslims whose children are educated in Britain. The ethos of many schools will often give little credence to religion, let alone Islam. In fact, quite the reverse. This has thrown the emphasis back onto the Muslim community to pass on the faith to its young. As Raza notes, the various initiatives have met with both successes and failures.

The future of the community in terms of its youth and their religious identity is considered by Raza in his chapter on 'Youth and Westernization'. He outlines some of the pressures on young Muslims which may lead to them adopting some of the values and beliefs of secular society which directly conflict with Islam. Such individuals, however 'Westernized', do not in fact find themselves universally accepted as such by the majority community which in the final analysis seems not to identify in general with non-Western cultures. Raza notes some of the problems this can bring, especially between parents and children over issues such as arranged marriages. He traces the fate of many young Muslims "on a tight rope by being half Westernized and half Easternized...They are forced to evolve their own Islamic identities as best they can from existing resources which may be limited or non-existent" (108). He outlines what the dynamics of this process must involve.

"The Muslim youth therefore have to develop a strong Islamic identity which does not emanate from reaction and is based on a sound understanding of Islam...transcending the sectarian, class, ethnic and cultural barriers in which they are imprisoned" (109).

Raza frankly addresses the many issues and problems faced by Muslim women in Britain. He unearths many of the means used by some sections of the community to keep women in a subordinate position to men. For example, removing many young girls from school at the age of sixteen will ensure that they will not move onto have a career, and therefore become too independent for a prospective husband. Often such a move is justified on 'religious reasons', with the result that many young girls begin to turn away from a faith which is propounded to them in such a way. Raza is highly critical of the 'chastity belt' mentality of some sections of the community (110) whereby extreme limitations are placed upon women and girls. But it is questionable as to whether the imposition of Islam as a package of strict rules and regulations is a successful defence of Islamic identity in the face of secularism. Racism exists at many levels of British society, and this in itself poses a challenge to identity. Raza adds that many who confront obstacles to their assimilation into British life, begin to question who they are...Pakistani, British, Muslim?

Despite all Raza's consideration of a wide range of issues he fails to include any significant discussion of pluralism and its implications for British Muslims. His discussion of secularism and its potentially damaging effect on the identity of young Muslims fails to expand into a discussion of wider *ideological diversity* and the impact that it may have. His account of Islam in Britain serves as only a general introduction to various issues since it does not go into the theoretical implications of Muslims as a religious minority.

Arising out of the *Community Religions Project* at Leeds University, Stephen Barton has conducted a study of the Bengali Muslims of Bradford (111). The fieldwork for his study occurred between 1977 and 1980, and was published in 1986. He concentrates in particular on their migration and settlement from Sylhet, their Islamic observance in Bradford, the organisation and authority of the community, the role of the *madrassahs*, and the function of the Imam and the mosque. Like Saifullah-Khan's study of the Mirpuri community in Bradford, Barton's is similar in its aims and intentions. He sketches a picture of what life is like in Bengal, and in Bradford, and in particular how the practice of Islam has accommodated to its setting in Yorkshire. Barton notes how *purdah* in various forms has by and large been maintained in the community. It remains, he suggests, "an important symbol of the identity of the Bengalis as a community of Muslims" (112). As such, the community has looked toward the *madrassahs* for the inculcation and reinforcement of such traditions. But the *madrassah* is generally geared towards the Islamic education of *children*. For young adults undergoing the crucial identity changes of adolescence, the mosque has largely failed to meet their needs. Thus the aims of the *madrassah* have not met their long-term goals, since at many levels...spiritually, emotionally, materially, and socially, it appears that the younger generation of Muslims is in general discarding 'tradition', in favour of more suitable and sustainable ways of asserting their identity as British Muslims.

An important point highlighted by Barton is the strength of the Bengali community due to the tension "between those whose view and observance of Islam is formed by recollection of the traditions of

Bangladesh and those who allow present circumstances to impinge upon their faith and seek ways of believing that will in turn prove formative of circumstances" (113). This point raises a theme that is beginning to emerge more strongly in writing about the Muslim community. Second and third generation Muslims are trying to find the 'core elements' of Islam and live out these aspects in the light of their cultural situation. Thus, the ethnic nature of their identity appears to be weakening as their *religious* identity comes to the fore. Despite this emerging trend, the subject of religious pluralism has not it seems, entered into the debate...apart from a short paper on the subject by Muhammad Anwar (114).

Anwar begins his paper with a demographic picture of Muslim activity in Britain, followed by an exploration of issues involved in being a religious minority group. So for instance, Anwar discusses various political, family, educational and employment problems faced by Muslims. But much of his treatment of pluralism and identity fails to go beyond consideration of statistics..."almost half of the Muslim parents (47%) and 41% of young Muslims felt that the 'children are influenced by Christianity because they attend assemblies at school with a Christian service" (115). He simply notes that this can lead to young Muslims thinking more about Christianity than Islam, and that such a scenario is worrying for various religious leaders and parents. Anwar fails to really tackle the implications for religious identity among Muslims that pluralism entails. He simply offers suggestions for slowing down the processes of acculturation and secularization, through an "organised effort to preserve those aspects of its religion and culture which it values most highly" (116).

Anwar's career as a sociologist and analyst of the Muslim community in Britain has produced a number of significant studies of the community, many of which are quantitative in nature (117). In particular, his statistical surveys allow for a charting of significant changes amongst Pakistani Muslims living in Britain. For example, the male-female ratio has changed considerably over the period from 1961-1982, largely as a result of female migration. That there is now a more equal sex ratio, and a re-establishment of family life, the birth rate has risen. That the community has a large number of

children born and brought up in Britain, has implications for a number of issues, not least education. Surveys of voting behaviour of Pakistanis shows that there is a higher turn-out rate compared to white voters. In this, and other ways, it is possible to identify a greater participation of Muslims in British life, and the mythical nature of intentions to return permanently to Pakistan. That the community appears to be orientated around its future in Britain has repercussions for the future national identity of its young people.

A particular chapter of *Pakistanis in Britain* focuses on the cohesive force that Islam has upon the community. Mosques, community centres, festivals, language, and communal concerns all serve to reinforce the identity of the community. Throughout his study, the identity of Anwar's informants as *Pakistani* Muslims is evident. "The pattern of the religious activities in the community seemed to maintain a separate Pakistani cultural existence in Rochdale" (118). Anwar suggests however that this scenario might change amongst the second (and third?) generation.

Various postgraduate theses have been written by students of the Centre for Islam and Muslim-Christian Relations, University of Birmingham. Of particular interest is R. Sharif's study on *Young Muslim Women of Pakistani Origin in Britain* (119). This was a study conducted in various schools and colleges in Birmingham. Subjects were all born in the U.K. or were under three years of age when first coming to live in Britain. The study aims to investigate how the subjects perceived themselves, their lives, the future, and their environment. After a thorough opening chapter discussing methodological issues, the thesis considers the background of the young girls, and an overview is given of the various studies conducted on the housing, employment and incidences of mental illness among first generation immigrants. Numerous important issues are raised in the author's interviews with the girls. Matters of arranged marriages, education, careers, friendships, dress, and race are discussed at length. Perhaps the most important section of the study for this research is that part addressed specifically to the girls' attitudes to Islam. Religion seems to play a significant part in their home lives, but many confessed to having little real

understanding of Islamic beliefs, or the teaching of the Qur'an. Some of the girls have been strongly motivated to change this situation, especially so as to be better equipped to challenge their parents' misunderstanding or ignorance about Qur'anic teaching (120). Furthermore, they do not want to pass on to their own children the Islam of their parents that has been in many cases mixed and confused with Pakistani cultural traditions and superstitions (121).

Sharif's thesis raises many of the typical issues that concern Asian young women. In particular, the study is especially useful in that it sets these girls' lives into a wider context. In other words, they must be seen as products of a generation of immigrants who faced particular problems of their own. Sharif echoes Dilip Hiro who points out a possible identity difference between these two generations..."a man may have come to Britain to make a better living...(but) his essential 'psyche' has not been affected in this process whereas his children, brought up in Britain, do not feel as though they are a part of Pakistani society" (122). It would seem then that many young Pakistani girls are endeavouring to establish their own individual identities against the backdrop of their parents' backgrounds and insecurities as a result of living in secular Britain.

The profile of the Centre for Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations in Birmingham has been raised by the work of its current director, Jorgen Nielsen (123). Much of his research has dealt with the immigration and integration of Muslims into Western society and the responses of both the host society and the immigrants themselves to this. Amid much of his writing, it is possible to gain an impression of the problems and issues that Muslims face, especially in the wake of controversy and racism. One of his publications in particular warrants mention, since it examines the 'identity search' taking place especially amongst young Muslims in Britain (124).

His paper begins by outlining the demographic make-up of the community, and the diversity ethnically, regionally, linguistically, culturally, and spiritually within the community (125). He suggests that the identity of Islam in Britain has come about largely through its immigrant population, the mosques and organizations that have

been established, and the issues faced by the community which facilitate a solidarity that is visible in the wider society...for example, campaigns for the availability of halal meat, and separate Muslim education. He goes on to note that there are various forces at work that are leading to a re-examination of Muslim identity in Britain. Of the most significant is generational change and changing attitudes of young women, and the way they are...

"acquiring and then applying their Islam. Many young people are undergoing a process of education and socialization where the other cultural experiences of the wider society present viable alternatives. Certainly, some are choosing the path of breaking with an Islamic identity altogether. But there are indications that a growing number of young women are engaged in reapplication of the Islamic sources. It is here that some of the most radical new formulation of Islamic ideals may be found. This is a process which involves a break with inherited cultural expressions of Islam, particularly with the inherited gender and authority-related patterns of Muslim life, and also an at least partial discarding of the traditional sources for the expression of specific Islamic identity. Dress codes, methods of arranging marriages, gender-roles are , in these circumstances, losing their importance as symbols of Islam. The emphasis appears to be changing towards the underlying values of ethical and spiritual principles. With time, it may be expected that the basic Islamic principles identified through this process will, in turn, lead to new cultural forms of expressing Islamic identity" (126).

Nielsen is hinting here at some of the fundamental issues that this research aims to explore. Even back in 1987, Nielsen found evidence of significant changes and developments taking place among young Muslims. By now, these trends will perhaps be even more sharply delineated, and the predictions of the above quotation may be unfolding in concrete ways.

Most mosques in Britain produce some kind of newsletter or magazine. There are also a number of newspaper and magazine publications directed towards Muslims that attempt to uncover various issues and news items (127). Religious identity has been a popular topic for consideration, but as is so evident from the literature review so far, examination is often shallow, terms undefined, and there is little theoretical analysis. While some Muslims working in academic fields *have* started to consider the various theoretical implications for

Muslims living in the West, such as Akbar Ahmed's *Postmodernism and Islam* or Tariq Modood's *Racial Equality: Colour, Culture and Justice* (128) religious pluralism and its implications for identity has not so far been high on their agendas.

Akbar Ahmed, a Pakistani anthropologist, has contributed to an understanding of Islam's confrontation with modernity in several publications (129). In *Postmodernism and Islam*, he attempts to provide some analysis of the world in which Islam now finds itself, characterized by modernity in many forms. Reviews of this book (130) were critical of its "chaotic" nature, yet it provides the reader with concrete examples of the situation of Islam in a world characteristically, "secular, cynical, irreverent, fragmented, materialistic, and therefore for a Muslim, often hostile" (131). Some of Ahmed's ideas developed into a BBC television series and an accompanying book, *Living Islam*. This raised numerous issues, not least that of the apparent conflict for many Muslim countries between Islam and Western modernity. Much of the focus centres upon the impact of 'Western' values upon countries such as Iran, Turkey and Pakistan. A short section of the book examines the Muslim minorities living in the West and some of the identity issues that arise. Given the various issues and controversies that have raised the profile of the Muslim community, combined with the hostility they may have to confront, the result has been, Ahmed writes, "a sharpened Muslim sense of identity" (132). This distinct sense of identity has been particularly evident among the youth, "who wished to assert themselves. In this situation issues of race and religion often fused, as growing racism forced them into a greater sense of religious identity" (133).

New literature on Western Muslim communities continues to appear. One recent work specifically examines the integration of Islam and Muslims into Western European culture (134). It looks at the structural barriers facing Muslims in their attempt to participate on an equal basis in society; Muslim organizations; and, case studies of particular Western countries in which there are significant Muslim minority groups. The chapter written by the editors touches upon a number of important issues for this study. Having examined some of

the obstacles facing Muslims living in the West, it goes on to suggest how the young generation may be affected by the secularism of the West.

"For the next generations of these migrants in Europe, a secularization process may be expected. This will not automatically imply that the value of Islam will vanish for them. On the contrary, it can be argued that despite the existing differences in the perception of Islam, their Islamic background will increasingly become a common-identity symbol to these migrants, differentiating them from the hostile society around them. In other words, Islam will come to the foreground, not as an entity of religious rituals and behavioural rules, but as a symbol of a separate identity" (135).

It is the dynamics of this apparent process amid the atmosphere of plurality in which it is set that is central concern of this study. Later chapters will attempt to dissect the factors that underpin the statements in this quotation.

Finally, in tracing literature available in relation to Islam in Britain, the past five years or so have seen the growth of various *da'wah* (propagation/mission) publications. Various Islamic organizations such as the Islamic Propagation Centre in Birmingham have produced missionary literature aiming to promote Islam to non-Muslims, and to 'lapsed' Muslims. Despite the good intentions behind this material, there are often a whole wealth of sectarian, political, and ethnic interests behind these productions. In their discussions of Islam in relation to other faiths, they simply echo Qur'anic teaching on the subject. There is little attempt to get behind the questions that pluralism raises for Muslims in Britain.

It seems that the time is opportune for a detailed theoretical study of religious identity and its relationship to religious pluralism from an Islamic perspective. Young Muslims are no longer taking their Islamic beliefs 'on trust'. In a society that teaches its children to question a whole range of assumptions about the world, religious choices are also coming under scrutiny. It will be interesting to consider the relative strength of Islamic identity between those who have never questioned their faith, and those Muslims who have actively chosen

Islam from among the various religious traditions available in Britain's religious 'hall of mirrors' (136).

1.3. Methodology

Issues relating to the religious identity of Muslims in Britain appear to be at the forefront of much current academic and Muslim media attention. Scholars, imams, educators, and so on, all appear to be aware that the question of religious identity for those young Muslims growing up in Britain's plural society, is of urgent concern.

This research aims to explore some of the issues raised by the Muslim community's awareness of its situation....characterized by plurality and diversity at many levels. The literature review reflects something of the material that has been written so far on the question of religious identity for Muslims. These primary sources will be drawn upon for the background and theoretical dimension of the research. But an investigation such as this seems to require a theoretical basis grounded substantially in practical fieldwork too. Therefore going out into Muslim communities in Britain, and in Pakistan, has enabled the research question to address the actual grassroot realities of communities. As Joan E. Sieber notes in her book *Planning Ethically Responsible Research...*

"researchers usually try to address the concerns they think their subjects *ought* to have. However, it is important for the researcher to determine what the (actual) concerns of (the) subject population are" (137)
(my emphasis)

A priority at this point is to describe how this research has been undertaken as a whole, and precisely how my fieldwork both in this country and in Pakistan has been planned, conducted, and reported.

There are numerous methodological problems surrounding research such as this. For example, it could be argued that the focus of the study should be *groups* or faith communities, made up of individuals, who may be affected by pluralism. On the other hand, it is similarly possible to argue that particular attention should be upon the *individual*, who is affected by the group, the family, and so on. In

other words, should fieldwork investigate religious identity at the macro or micro-level? There are limitations of confining the exploration to a particular focus, so wherever possible the effects of pluralism on both individuals and communities has been considered.

To find out how Muslims view their relationship with members of other faith communities and the wider society around them, and how they are affected by them, has meant asking the right kind of questions. When being interviewed about such matters, many Muslims may as representatives of their faith put forward the 'official' view of Islam with regard to other faiths. Therefore, to assess accurately how they may be affected by pluralism and secularism involves a certain degree of skilful means. To try to overcome this problem, there seemed to be a number of options.

1) It would seem that many young Muslims are trying to discover a 'core element' of Islamic faith. They beg the question, 'what is the essential essence of Islam for Muslims in Britain today'? In asking such questions, they confront the dilemmas and problems they face. They are perhaps the most likely age group to discuss the conflicts that pluralism and secularism bring. Confining attention therefore to the ~~age~~ range 18-25 years could elicit the most authentic data. It is perhaps the younger age group, who in trying to discover the essentials of their faith, are most likely to be concerned with secularism and pluralism, if not theoretically, then practically.

2) A second possibility was to discuss the questions that this research poses with Muslim community leaders. In such a position they are likely to be able to articulate clearly the problems and affects of pluralism in the Muslim community amongst all age groups. Their experience can reflect the concerns of the community, and they themselves are likely to have seriously confronted the issues that pluralism and secularism bring.

In the end a combination of these approaches was used in an attempt to bring forth the most accurate data. Thus, discussion with community leaders brought out some of the more abstract, theoretical issues, while discussion with younger Muslims reflected the practical

(and sometimes theoretical) questions that Muslims are asking in relation to pluralism and secularism.

At this point much more detailed consideration needs to be given to the fieldwork investigations that were undertaken during the course of this research. Firstly, some of the more significant members of Britain's Muslim community were identified with a view to arranging interviews with them. A letter was then drafted to be sent out to a number of people based in London and Bradford. In this letter the nature of the research was briefly described, and subjects were asked if it would be possible to meet them. Included with the letter were a series of questions that were intended to indicate to subjects the kind of issues that were to be raised. Response rates were unfortunately rather poor. Follow-up telephone calls were necessary in most cases to arrange a meeting. In nearly all cases this proved successful, and most of the subjects were willing to discuss the research. This of course raised the possibility of inducing 'volunteer effect' by telephoning directly, but this was a uncertainty that had to be faced.

Visits were arranged with eight community leaders in London, and four in Bradford. To ease the process of initial introduction, a letter was given to each of my subjects written by the research supervisor. This letter briefly explained the author's background and intentions, and affirmed the value of the research. That this letter of introduction was written by someone who would have been known to the subjects and helped perhaps in winning the respect and co-operation of the contacts. It is often difficult for 'outsiders' to have direct contact with Muslim communities in Britain. The latter may be suspicious of unknown individuals who wish to approach the community. Often a 'gatekeeper' is needed - someone whom the community trusts - and such an individual can facilitate the establishment of meetings. While leaders or representatives may be more accessible, it is still useful to be able to refer to a 'gatekeeper' figure or someone who can act as a link between the particular community and the wider society.

For the kind of unstructured interviews that were being conducted, the author's gender as a female was an asset. Some subjects may feel threatened by a man who enters the host's setting, talks for several hours, and is then never heard of again. To intrude into someone's office or home environment for a relatively brief time is perhaps easier as a woman, especially in a male-dominated setting, "since females generally are perceived as warmer and less threatening than males" (138). Of course, a woman's presence could have had an opposite effect. Compared to a male researcher, a woman may not have been taken seriously. But fortunately the problem of gender-related difficulties was not encountered.

Many of the contacts were keen that some of their friends or colleagues who would have been interested in the research were contacted. This led to the carrying out of a number of other unstructured interviews with people who were not originally highlighted as community leaders. This in fact proved to be a bonus. The number of contacts was not only increased, widening the variety of people interviewed, but some of the additional interviewees included some of the younger generation of Muslims currently living in Britain today.

In order to conduct the interviews the series of questions that had been sent out with the initial letters were used as the basis for the discussion. In briefly explaining the rationale behind the research at the beginning of the interviews, an apparent willingness on the part of the subjects to talk freely was created. In both constructing the questionnaire, and in the course of the interviews, some key ethical principles were born in mind. As Joan Sieber suggests, good methodology and sound ethics in research go hand in hand (139). Respect the autonomy of subjects was maintained, and no attempt was made to discuss issues of identity with them in a way that might have been seen as exploitative, invasive, or discourteous.

It is a well known fact that many dimensions of behaviour and body language communicate information to subjects. To be treated as a scholar pursuing something worthwhile, every attempt must be made on the part of the researcher to dress and behave in a way that

reflects this. The formation of rapport, trust and respect are essential in the subject-researcher relationship, particularly if the fieldworker wants to gather valid data from an unstructured interview methodology.

One of the key interview subjects was unavailable at the first stage of fieldwork in Britain. However, later on in the course of the research, contact was made with the individual concerned. A meeting was arranged, and an interview was conducted along the same lines as the previous fieldwork. But since the thesis had developed considerably by this time, the questions and issues raised during the interview were slightly amended to reflect the progress of the research, and elicit the most helpful information.

As the work progressed it became evident that the research would benefit greatly if it could be backed up by fieldwork conducted in Pakistan. Through connections with the Institute of Policy Studies in Islamabad, it was possible to make the necessary arrangements, and thus gain some insights into the background from which many British Muslims come. Many British Muslims have their origins in Pakistan. Their relatively recent arrival in Britain during the 1960's and 1970's suggests that vivid and enduring memories of their homeland remain with them.

For Pakistani Muslims in Britain, their status as a religious minority amid an atmosphere of pluralism, is a situation with which many of them will have been unfamiliar on arrival in Britain. Created specifically as an Islamic nation, the cultural life of Pakistan is essentially orientated towards Islam. In such a religious environment, being 'Muslim' will be for many an automatic and unquestioned religious choice. Pluralism in the religious sphere of life is minimal. Visiting Pakistan enabled some assessments to be made as to how Islam provides an organising focus for the religious, social, and cultural life of the country. This in turn facilitated some suggestions to be made as to how Pakistani Muslims are affected by religious pluralism in *this* country. How are the different generations within the community affirming, altering, or abandoning their identity given that they are in many ways different from the majority of the British

population? How far do British Muslims appear to have developed or changed their identities over the course of their residence in Britain?

The methodology for fieldwork in Pakistan was based largely on ethnographic techniques, and participant observation in particular. William Shaffir and Robert Stebbins describe it thus "fieldwork is carried out by immersing oneself in a collective way of life, recording the ongoing experiences of those observed in their symbolic world, and learning to define the world from the perspective of those studied" (140).

Various communities, both rural and urban, were located as areas from which significant numbers of Muslims in Britain originated. Using unstructured interviews (based upon many of the questions that had been posed to the British interviewees) some understanding of the attitudes of Muslims about their lives in Pakistan was gained. But with fieldwork activities it has been born in mind that, as Bhikhu Parekh suggests...

"it is always impertinent for a man to claim to write about a community of men, whether his own or another. He cannot avoid talking about them as if they were objects under a microscope, and this denies them their subjectivity and dignity. Further, he cannot avoid making general observations about them, and that involved denying them their uniqueness. Such general observations again have an air of unreality about them. While they might describe some members of a society accurately, they never fit all" (141).

Brief mention has already been made of gender issues in relation to fieldwork. Although many research settings are today 'coed', the fact that part of the fieldwork for this study was in an Islamic country meant that social life is in many ways male-dominated. On the one hand this can raise problems of gaining co-operation and respect, but on the other a women may be left to engage in fieldwork without interference. The famous woman traveller, Dervla Murphy, writes about this issue. She has travelled widely through Pakistan's rural areas, and has lived among Mirpuris in Bradford, or as she quotes its nickname "Bradistan or Pakiford"...

"encountering Mirpuris in Manningham (Bradford) would be quite unlike encountering them in Azad Kashmir. As a solitary White woman cycling through their territory, I had provoked excited curiosity, some initial distrust or apprehension and a great deal of hospitality. As a White in Britain, I was just another of those people with whom the average Mirpuri chooses to have minimal contact, partly (and only partly) because most Whites have never shown most Mirpuris an alternative course. Unfortunately the advantages of Islam's attitude to women are largely confined to Muslim men, with occasional spin-offs for non-Muslim women. I have often benefitted from Islamic chivalry; in Muslim countries I was assiduously protected, as a woman, by tribesmen and villagers whose hostility might well have been aroused by a solitary White male traveller" (142).

An essential part of the time in Pakistan was spend trying to learn the meanings that are involved in social interactions. This facilitated the acquisition of some appreciation and awareness of how local cultures are organised and defined, particularly in relation to Islam. This kind of fieldwork threw up the dilemma of how to reach a balance between total involvement in subjects' daily lives, and the ability to observe with a view to conducting dispassionate research. The responses of communities to the presence of a researcher will largely determine how the dynamics of this balance will be resolved. But gaining some kind of emic perspective was an essential aim during the fieldwork in Pakistan. Understanding why people do what they do will be one of the greatest indicators of religious identity..."the simple, ritualistic behaviour of going to the market...(indicates) how people use their time and space, how they determine what is precious, sacred, and profane" (143).

At this stage of the research, another methodological point - related perhaps to ethics - should perhaps be made. Willem Bijlefeld discusses the dilemma as to whether "a person who is not a Muslim has the mental ability and the moral right to seek to answer the question what it means to be a Muslim" (144). This poses something of an ethical hazard. But to...

"shun that risk means to give into the dangerous claims of a religious absolutism and a theological exclusivism that ultimately denies the possibility of cross-cultural and inter-religious understanding, and, most importantly, forgets that in the final analysis there can be no outsiders to "faith" if faith is a matter of being truly

human. Embarking upon such an adventure is a pretentious imposition unless one is prepared to submit again and again to correction by the facts. The following account of the faith dimension of Muslim identity is offered not because the author can claim to be a Muslim but because (s)he is convinced that it is a particularly good thing for all of us to begin to understand and appreciate something of what "being a Muslim" implies" (145).

It is reassuring to discover an academic who succinctly expresses this methodological concern, yet acknowledges the importance of studying Islam from the non-Muslim point of view. His words may be of encouragement to anyone studying a religion from the 'outside'.

Since much of the data for this chapter has built up as a result of observations of, and interest in Britain's Muslim community, Bijlefeld again discusses the kind of problems this may raise.

"It is inadequate to seek to define what Islam is and what being a Muslim implies primarily or even exclusively on the basis of observations of the actual behaviour of a group. The most accurate description of a Muslim community does not necessarily reflect what Islam can and does mean to many Muslims. In all religious traditions and communities there are persons and events that obscure rather than reflect what many of those who live in it see as the true character of their faith" (146).

There could be therefore, a potential obscurity of Islam due to a gulf between the true character of the faith, and the actions of those that betray it. In the words of Muhammad Abduh, "Islam is concealed from Western eyes by a heavy curtain of Muslims" (147). This 'heavy curtain' may blur our vision of how Islam can imbue a believer with a sense of Muslim identity.

Another methodological dilemma that faces Muslim or non-Muslim scholars, is the varied and ever-changing character of the Muslim world (148). "Regionally, culturally, politically, economically, and above all humanly, (we are) almost blinded by the splendor of diversity" (149). Identifying those influences on the identity of Muslims, therefore seems to require that...

We discover the common elements, that which is permanent, abiding, and distinctively "Islamic". We know

that "being Muslim" implies much more than the acceptance of a particular set of beliefs, and the question of identity is for most Muslims infinitely more than a matter of private introspection" (150).

1.4. Scope of Research

In order that a piece of research remains focussed on the issue being addressed, it is important to lay down its parameters and limitations. In terms of this research, the key theoretical focal point is the notion of religious identity. Specifically, this concept is being examined in relation to the Muslim community in Britain, though passing reference is made to other faith groups. Since this research is essentially grounded within the discipline of Religious Studies, the analysis of identity and religious identity is intended to offer a contribution to this academic field, rather than the broader social sciences or Islamic studies, though of course the research may be of interest to scholars from these disciplines.

1.5. Structure of the Thesis

The first part of the study is essentially theoretical. It is devoted to defining the terms 'secularism', 'pluralism', 'identity', and so on; by its very nature it is interdisciplinary in nature, drawing upon Sociology, Social Psychology, as well as Religious Studies. The second part of the study begins to tackle the question that lies behind this research: what impact and effect is there on the believer and his or her beliefs, conviction and practice, through an awareness of diverse belief systems? How might this be expressed? Having laid some theoretical foundations in the early part of the research, the research considers, as a result of investigations within the Muslim community, what effect pluralism and secularism are having (or not) on religious consciousness and identity. Attention is given to the nature of the second generation Muslims who form a transitive link between the first and third generations. How are they keeping the elder generations happy, while at the same time evolving their relationship with the wider community? Also, what are the characteristics of the straggling first/second generations...those who arrived in Britain as teenagers? They lived with the mentality of

Pakistan, but within a British context...what potential insecurities about identity have they passed onto their children?

In order to counterbalance the forces of the wider society, Muslim communities have established a number of organizations and strategies for identity preservation. The final part of the thesis examines these, and attempts to offer an assessment of their adequacy in view of the theoretical analysis of religious identity in the first part of the research.

Notes for Chapter One

- (1) see for example the 'Q' News report on the 'Mind, Body and Soul Project' youth conference entitled, 'Beyond Beards, Scarves and Halal Meat: Is there a Muslim Identity in the 21st Century?' ('Q News', 12th February 1993).
- (2) Edward Said, 1993 Reith Lecture, reproduced (edited) in *The Independent*, 22 July, 1993.
- (3) *ibid.*
- (4) see for example, Leslie Francis, *Rural Anglicanism*, London: Collins Liturgical Publications, 1985 or Francis' 'Attitude and Longitude: a Study in Measurement' in *Character Potential*, vol.8, 1978.
- (5) Muhammad Anwar, 'Religious Identity in Plural Societies: the case of Britain', in JIMMA, vol.2.2, 1980, p120
- (6) Paul Weller, 'The Rushdie Affair, Plurality of Values and the Ideal of a Multi-cultural Society', *Navet Papers*, vol.2, October 1990.
- (7) Erik Erikson, 'The Concept of Identity in Race Relations: Notes and Queries', in *Daedalus*, vol.95, 1966, p146.
- (8) William James (1842-1910), published a wide variety of literature in the fields of philosophy and psychology. For our purposes, his *The Principles of Psychology* (vol.1) (Harvard University Press, 1981) which in part discusses 'The Consciousness of Self' is relevant, particularly where a small section of the chapter considers 'personal identity'.
- (9) see for example his classic work on religion, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, (Fount Paperbacks, 1977) arising out of his Gifford Lectures delivered at Edinburgh University, 1901-2.
- (10) *ibid.*, p315.
- (11) see for example, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, Faber & Faber 1968; *Identity and the Life-cycle*, New York: International Universities Press, 1959.
- (12) Erik Erikson, 'Identity', in *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, vol.7, edited by David Sills, 1968, p61.
- (13) *ibid.*
- (14) *ibid.*, p65.
- (15) Erik Erikson, 'The Concept of Identity in Race Relations: Notes and Queries', *op. cit.*, p146.
- (16) Robert Penn Warren, *Who Speaks for the Negro?*, New York, 1965, p17, cited in Erikson, 'The Concept of Identity in Race Relations', *op. cit.*, p145.
- (17) These terms will be explained in further depth in chapter two.

- (18) Erik Erikson, 'The Concept of Identity in Race Relations', op. cit., p168.
- (19) Jonathan Glover, '*I: The Philosophy and Psychology of Personal Identity*', Penguin, 1988.
- (20) *ibid.*, p158.
- (21) Hans Mol, *Identity and the Sacred*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1976; *Identity and Religion*, SAGE Publications, 1978.
- (22) Hans Mol, *Identity and the Sacred*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1976, p55.
- (23) David de Levita, *The Concept of Identity*, New York: Basic Books, 1965
- (24) Robert Bellah, Epilogue: Religion and Progress in Modern Asia, in Bellah, Robert N. (ed.), *Religion and Progress in Modern Asia*, New York: Free Press, 1965.
- (25) Allen Wheelis, *The Quest for Identity*, New York: Norton, 1958
- (26) *ibid.*, p60.
- (27) William James, *Principles of Psychology* (2 vols), New York: Holt, 1890; and James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, Collins, 1977.
- (28) Erik Erikson, *Identity - Youth and Crisis*, New York: Norton, 1968; 'Identity, Psychosocial' in *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, New York, MacMillan, 1968a, vol.7, pp.61-5.
- (29) Robert Bellah, 'The Sociology of Religion' in *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, New York: MacMillan, 1968, vol13, pp.406-14; *Beyond Belief*, New York, Harper, 1970; 'Durkheim and History', *American Sociological Review*, vol.24, 1959.
- (30) William Shaffir, 'Witnessing as Identity Consolidation': the Case of Lubavitcher Chassidism, in Hans Mol, *Identity and Religion*, SAGE Publications, 1978, pp.39-59; also Mol's own paper, 'Maori Identity and Religion', *ibid.*, app.179-203.
- (31) Jan Thurlings, Identity and Pluralism: A Case-Study, in Hans Mol (ed), *Identity and Religion*, SAGE Publications, 1978, p169.
- (32) *ibid.*, p170.
- (33) Bryan Wilson, *Religion in Sociological Perspective*, Oxford University Press, 1982.
- (34) Meredith B. McGuire, *Religion: The Social Context*, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1987.
- (35) Peter Berger, *The Social Reality of Religion*, Faber & Faber, 1969.
- (36) Joachim Wach, *Sociology of Religion*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944.

(37) Kim Knott, *Religion and Identity and the Study of Ethnic Minority Religions in Britain*, Leeds University Community Religions Project, 1986.

(38) Bryan Wilson, *Religion in Sociological Perspective*, op. cit., p34.

(39) *ibid.*, p39.

(40) Some of the papers from this conference were brought together in a book edited by Victor Hayes, *Identity Issues and World Religions: Proceedings of the 15th Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions*, published by the Australian Association for the Study of Religions, 1986.

(41) Kim Knott, op. cit., p1

(42) Arnold Dashefsky, 'And the Search Goes on: Religio-ethnic Identity and Identification', in *Sociological Analysis*, 1972, vol.33.4, pp.239-245.

(43) Kim Knott, *ibid.*

(44) Muhammad Anwar has written a number of books and papers on South Asians, and particularly Pakistanis in Britain. See his, *Pakistanis in Britain: A Sociological Study*, New Century Publishers, 1985.

(45) Muhammad Anwar, 'Religious Identity in Plural Societies: the case of Britain', op. cit., 1980.

(46) Kim Knott, op. cit., p4

(47) Later on in this research, it will be suggested that particularly for the younger generations, religious identity rather than ethnic identity is the most important factor in self-perception. For example, many young Muslims may feel that their being Muslim is far more significant than their being British Pakistanis.

(48) Meredith McGuire, op. cit.

(49) Joachim Wach, *Sociology of Religion*, University of Chicago Press, 1944.

(50) *ibid.*, p23.

(51) *ibid.*, p29.

(52) *ibid.*, p31.

(53) Peter Berger & Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, Penguin 1967; Peter Berger, *The Social Reality of Religion*, op.cit.; Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, New York: Doubleday, 1969.

(54) Peter Berger, *The Social Reality of Religion*, Faber & Faber, 1969, p3.

- (55) Peter Berger, *The Heretical Imperative*, London: Collins, 1980, p19.
- (56) Iqra Trust, *Research on Public Attitudes to Islam*, Research Report No.1, 1991. 46% of the interviewees (MORI interviewed a quota sample of 1957 people aged 15 or over in December 1990) had "heard but knew nothing about" Islam.
- (57) Virgil Gillespie, *Religious Conversion and Identity*, Ph.D. Claremont Graduate School, 1973.
- (58) see for example, Norman Mirsky, *Unorthodox Judaism*, Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1978, which deals with the identity of American Jews.
- (59) Sol Roth, Religious Pluralism - a Problem or a Solution?, in *Judaism*, Spring 1987, vol.36,.
- (60) Sol Roth, op. cit., p164.
- (61) ibid., p165.
- (62) ibid., p166.
- (63) Aaron Lor, The Quest for Jewish Identity in a Changing Social Milieu, in *Religious Education*, March-April 1979, vol:74.2.
- (64) ibid., p174.
- (65) ibid., p178.
- (66) Peter Bishop, What Light does the Jewish Experience Shed on the Idea of a Multi-Cultural Britain?, in Y. Bauer et. al., *Remembering for the Future*, Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1989.
- (67) Peter Bishop, op. cit., citing Muhammad Anwar, *The Myth of Return: Pakistanis in Britain*, New Century Publishers, 1979, p159.
- (68) Leslie Francis, 'The Religious Significance of Denominational Identity among Eleven Year Old Children in England', in *Journal of Christian Education*, vol.97, April 1990; also Francis' 'Discovering the Identity of Anglicanism: The Canadian Experience, in *The Quarterly Journal of the Board for Social Responsibility*, April-June 1989
- (69) Ronald Goodenow, 'Schooling, Identity and Denominationalism: The American Experience, in Tulasiewicz, T., *Christianity and Educational Provision*, New York: Routledge, 1988
- (70) see for example M.M. Ally, 'The Growth and Organisation of the Muslim Community in Britain, CSIC *Research Papers*, no.1, March 1979.
- (71) see Dan Cohn-Sherbok (ed), *The Salman Rushdie Controversy in Interreligious Perspective*, Edwin Mellen Press, 1990, or, David Bowen (ed), *The Satanic Verses: Bradford Responses*, Bradford & Ilkley Community College, 1992
- (72) K. Murad, 'Muslim Minorities - Towards a Practical Education', in *Afkar Inquiry*, July 1985, vol.2.7, pp.56-59.

- (73) Jorgen Nielsen, 'Muslims in Britain: Searching for an Identity', in *New Community*, Spring 1987, vol.13.3.
- (74) J.H. Taylor, *The Half-way Generation: a Study of Asian Youth in Newcastle*, Slough: NFER, 1976.
- (75) S. Ahmed, 'Asian Girls and Culture Conflict', in *Social Work Today*, vol.9, 1978.
- (76) Syed Abedin, 'Muslim Minority and Majority Countries' in *JIMMA*, vol.10, July, 1989, pp.375-424; also, 'Minority Conflict and the Ummah's Responsibility, in *The Universal Message*, Pakistan (Karachi), vol.13.10-11, 1992.
- (77) H. Alavi, 'Pakistanis in London' in S. Paterson (ed), *Immigrants in London*, London Council of Social Services, 1963.
- (78) Zaki Badawi, *Islam in Britain*, London: Ta Ha Publishers, 1981.
- (79) M. Hedayetullah, 'Muslim Migrants and Islam', in *New Community*, spring 1977, vol.5.4.
- (80) Muhammad Anwar, *Young Muslims in a Multi-Cultural Society*, Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1982.
- (81) Peter Clarke, 'The Ismaili Sect in London: Religious Institutions and Social Change, in *Religion*, vol.8.1, 1978.
- (82) Badr Dahya, 'The Nature of Pakistani Ethnicity in Industrial Cities in Britain', in *Urban Ethnicity*, edited by A. Cohen, London: Tavistock, 1974.
- (83) John Eade, *The Politics of Community: The Bangladeshi Community in East London*, Gower Publications, 1989.
- (84) Verity Saifullah-Khan, 'Purdah in the British Situation', in D.C. Barker (ed), *Dependence and Exploitation in Work and Marriage*, London: Longmans, 1976.
- (85) Jorgen Nielsen (ed), 'Christian-Muslim Relations into the 21st Century: A Round Table Discussion', in *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, vol.3.1, 1992.
- (86) F. M. Bhatti, 'Language Difficulties and Social Isolation: South Asian Women in Britain, in *New Community*, vol.115, Warwick, 1976.
- (87) Jorgen Nielsen, 'Christendom and Islam post-Gulf' in *European Vision*, 1991, no.16.
- (88) R.A. Abbasi, 'The Muslim Parliament: A Strategy for Growth and Prosperity' in *Trends*, Leicester 1992, vol.4.4
- (89) S.M. Naquib al-Attas, *Islam, Secularism and the Philosophy of the Future*, London: Mansell, 1985.
- (90) Stephen Barton, *The Bengali Muslims of Bradford*, Leeds University Community Religions Project, 1986.

- (91) J.S. Nagra, 'Asian Supplementary Schools', in *New Community*, Winter 1981, vol.9.3
- (92) Patricia Jeffery, *Pakistani Families in Bristol*, *New Community*, vol.1, 1972,
- (93) Muhammad Anwar, 'Religious Identity in Plural Societies: the Case of Britain', *JIMMA*, vol.2.2 & vol.3.1
- (94) see for example, Clifford Hill, *Immigration and Integration*, Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1969.
- (95) See for example the many publications of the Islamic Foundation, Leicester. (eg. *The Muslim Guide*, M.Y. McDermott & M.M. Ahsan, 1980)
- (96) Verity Saifullah-Khan, *Pakistani Villagers in a British City: the World of the Mirpuri Villager in Bradford and in his Village of Origin*, Ph.D. thesis, 1974, Bradford.
- (97) Peter Reed, *Moslem Adolescent Boys in Batley*, M.Phil. thesis, 1974, University of York.
- (98) *ibid.*, p50.
- (99) *ibid.*, p130-1.
- (100) *ibid.*, p154.
- (101) *ibid.*, p115.
- (102) *ibid.*, p152 & 192.
- (103) Muhammad S. Raza, *Islam in Britain: Past Present and Future*, Leicester: Volcano Press, 1991.
- (104) *ibid.*, introduction
- (105) *ibid.*
- (106) *ibid.*, p23.
- (107) *ibid.*, p53.
- (108) *ibid.*, p80.
- (109) *ibid.*, p82.
- (110) *ibid.*, p89.
- (111) Stephen Barton, *The Bengali Muslims of Bradford*, Leeds University Community Religions Project, 1986.
- (112) *ibid.*, p108.
- (113) *ibid.*, p192.

(114) Muhammad Anwar, 'Religious Identity in Plural Societies: The Case of Britain', op. cit.

(115) *ibid.*, p120

(116) *ibid.*

(117) see for example, Anwar's, *Pakistanis in Britain: a Sociological Study*, London: New Century Publishers, 1985.

(118) *ibid.*, p168.

(119) R. Sharif, *Young Muslim Women of Pakistani Origin in Britain*, M.A. Thesis, Birmingham University, 1985.

(120) *ibid.*, p117.

(121) *ibid.*

(122) *ibid.*, citing Dilip Hiro in *Cultural Conflict and the Asian Family*, Parekh & Parekh (eds), 1976.

(123) see for example, Jorgen Nielsen, *Muslims in Western Europe*, Edinburgh University Press, 1992; 'Attitudes to Islam in Britain: an anthology of Muslim Views', in *Muslims in Europe Series*, Paper no.5, March 1980; 'A Muslim Agenda for Britain: Some Reflections', in *New Community*, April 1991, vol.17.3.

(124) Jorgen Nielsen, 'Muslims in Britain: searching for an identity?', in *New Community*, vol.13.3, Spring 1987.

(125) *ibid.*

(126) *ibid.*

(127) see for example, 'Q' News or *The Muslim News*. These will be examined in Chapter Five.

(128) Akbar S. Ahmed, *Postmodernism and Islam*, London: Routledge, 1992; or Tariq Modood, *Racial Equality: Colour, Culture and Justice*, Institute for Public Policy Research, 1994.

(129) Akbar Ahmed, op. cit., and more recently, *Living Islam*, BBC Publications, 1993.

(130) see for example Stephen Howe's review in *New Statesman/New Society*, 12 June, 1992, p36.

(131) Sadhana Allison Puranik, 'Behind the Mosque', *The Times Higher*, April 23 1993, p15....a profile of Akbar Ahmed and a review of his BBC series based on partially on his earlier writings.

(132) Akbar Ahmed, *Living Islam*, op. cit., p157.

(133) *ibid.*, p158.

- (134) W.A.R. Shadid & P.S. von Koningsveld (eds), *The Integration of Islam and Hinduism in Western Europe*, The Netherlands, Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1991.
- (135) *ibid.*, p17.
- (136) The title given to a book by Chris Arthur, Mowbray, 1986.
- (137) Joan Sieber, *Planning Ethically Responsible Research*, SAGE publications, 1992, p26.
- (138) Shaffir, William & Stebbins, Robert, (eds), *Experiencing Fieldwork*, SAGE publications, 1991, - editors introduction - p55.
- (139) Joan Sieber, *op. cit.*
- (140) William Shaffir & Robert Stebbins, (eds), *ibid.*, p5.
- (141) Bhikhu Parekh cited in the frontpiece of Dervla Murphy, *Tales From Two Cities*, London: John Murray, 1987.
- (142) *ibid.*, p8 & 21.
- (143) David Fetterman, A Walk Through the Wilderness, in Shaffir and Stebbins, *op. cit.*, p94.
- (144) W. A. Bijlefeld, On Being Muslim: the Faith Dimension of Muslim Identity, in Y. Haddad, B. Haines, & E. Findly, *The Islamic Impact*, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1984, p220.
- (145) *ibid.*
- (146) *ibid.*
- (147) M. Abduh, *The Theology of Unity*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1965, p154.
- (148) By the term 'Muslim World' I am referring to any country where Islam is practiced whether by the majority of the population, or by a sizeable minority.
- (149) W.A. Bijlefeld, *op. cit.*, p221.
- (150) *ibid.*

CHAPTER TWO

Chapter Two - Theoretical Issues and Definitions

This thesis is grounded upon a number of central terms and concepts. Before detailed consideration can be given to religious identity and religious pluralism, this chapter will attempt to establish working definitions for each of these terms, and others that will be employed in this study. This will provide the linguistic tools with which to analyse and debate the key issues that this thesis seeks to explore. Various definitions will therefore be offered on such concepts as: religion, community, minority, identity, pluralism, secularism, liberalism, racism, multiculturalism, ethnicity, rationality, Islam, and individualism. An attempt will be made to offer definitions that have emerged from Western academic tradition, alongside Islamic definitions wherever possible. The task will then remain of assessing the adequacy these definitions in the light of modern life, and in view of the issues that this research raises.

2.1. Identity

In the first chapter of this thesis, the work of William James and Erik Erikson was introduced. As was discussed, it is on the basis of much of their work that identity has been subsequently explored and defined. It is at this point that the work of Erikson in particular must be considered in detail.

Erikson relies on a particularly psychosocial approach in his examination of identity. It is for him not just about individuals, but also their interaction with groups, and vice versa. Individual identity is offset against group or community identity. He suggests that as a child grows up he or she must "derive a vitalizing sense of reality from the awareness that his individual way of mastering experience (his ego synthesis) is a successful variant of a group identity (a group's way of organising experience) and is in accord with its space-time and life plan (1). This dialectic process is echoed by scholars such as Peter Berger, whose work will be considered in due course.

Erikson uses the word identity in a general sense fairly rarely, and he is aware that for his word 'identity' other scholars, such as George Mead (2) have used instead the term 'self'. Erikson often defines more precisely what he means, using concepts such as ego identity and personal identity. He makes an important distinction between these two. *Personal identity* refers to a perception within oneself of having "sameness and continuity in time" (3), as well as a recognition by others of this 'sameness and continuity'. On the other hand, *ego identity* refers to more than just existential sameness, but the "ego quality of this existence" (4). This makes it a highly subjective experience, and appears to point to the particular sense of 'me' or 'self' of which most people are aware. It brings together all the disparate identifications within a person into some kind of whole. Erikson expresses his indebtedness to William James who describes what a feeling of having an identity may be like.

"A man's character is discernible in the mental or moral attitude in which, when it came upon him, he felt himself most deeply and intensely active and alive. At such moments there is a voice inside which speaks and says, "*This is the real me!*" (5).

Erikson suggests that in the sense James uses the word 'character' the term 'identity' could replace it for the sense to remain the same.

Much of Erikson's work has focussed on how identity is formed, and how it develops over the life-cycle of an individual. In particular, he has looked at how all the earlier identifications of childhood are questioned during adolescence. It is in the teenage years that upheavals of identity appear especially apparent. This phase of the life-cycle ushers in a time where the sameness and continuities of the child are completely re-examined in order that the gap between childhood and adulthood can be bridged. During this time, many adolescents will be preoccupied not only with who they feel themselves to be, but also how their self-image accords with the ideal 'prototypes' of the day. If the process of re-establishing a new identity is successful, self-esteem is the reward. It is, according to Erikson, the feeling that one is "developing a defined personality within a social reality which one understands" (6). Erikson regards it as of paramount importance that the young person has the freedom

to express a changing ego-identity, even if it appears somewhat radical. Different individuals need varying amounts of 'space' to develop and integrate a new ego-identity within the social environment around them. But this freedom is essential, says Erikson.

As a psychologist, Erikson was interested not only in the general processes of identity development, but also with the human casualties of it. He describes in many of his works some of the manifestations of a disturbed identity. In so doing, he illustrates some of the means teenagers may use to try to find their identity, particularly where this goes to extremes. In itself, this is not of particular interest for this study, and examination of identity abnormalities would lead beyond the confines of this research. But having said that, it would be useful to consider briefly some of the more dramatic strategies youth may use to establish an 'adult' ego-identity, particularly through such means as 'over-identification'. To understand the dynamics of such behaviour will give some insights into the more extreme activities of youngsters, and young Muslims growing up in Britain are part of this adolescent community. It might go some way to explaining the radical rejection of religious or customary values by some 'Asian' teenagers, forsaking them for their opposites.

'Over-identification' is the process, according to Erikson, whereby a young person finds all their identification within the personality of a hero figure/idol or some kind of ethos. Where this happens to the point of an apparent loss of identity, the teenager may have found some way of keeping their life together. To subsume all their earlier identifications under the personality of someone else or their values and thus burying their own identity in the process, can be one way of eventually 'finding themselves'. In addition to this process, extreme intolerance for other opinions and values may be evident. This is necessary, suggests Erikson, to defend a sense of identity confusion. Along with intolerance for other standpoints, stereotyping and radical idealism may accompany adolescent identity changes. Any extreme form of this may be called an 'identity-crisis'.

In order for there to be a healthy transition into young adulthood, the role of significant individuals and of the immediate community is essential. It is in finding some niche in the social life of a group that an adolescent "gains an assured sense of inner continuity and social sameness which will bridge what he was as a child and what he is about to become, and will reconcile his conception of himself and his community's recognition of him" (7). Through being treated as someone with a purpose and role in the community the individual will feel affirmed, not only within him or herself, but by the community who witness the identity transformation. This often brings about a sense of psychosocial well-being, a recognition of 'being someone' who matters to others. The process of identity formation during adolescence is unlikely to be a smooth gradual development. With it will come steps forward and back. Erikson writes, "a sense of identity is never gained nor maintained once and for all. Like a "good conscience", it is constantly lost and regained, although more lasting and more economical methods of maintenance and restoration are evolved and fortified in late adolescence" (8). Some appreciation of where religious belief may fit into this process will be explored shortly.

In some senses, experimentation is an essential part of identity development. Identifying with other individuals of different habits, customs, occupations, or ideals, even if for a short time, will provide the opportunities to select a certain image or self-perception. It is often a crisis situation which forces certain decisions. Many of the available identificational role-models open to the individual are prescribed by the social-historical era in which the person lives. These constraints will limit the number of "socially meaningful models for workable combinations of identification fragments" (9). The stage in identity development when all identifications are in some way integrated, results in a coherent ego-identity. Here, if anywhere according to Erikson, "the whole has a different quality than the sum of its parts" (10). But the process of reaching this point depends on simultaneous self-awareness and reflections. Often this will be largely unconscious, except according to Erikson where "inner conditions and outer circumstances combine to aggravate a painful, or elated "identity consciousness"" (11).

Identity crisis within the individual may be related to wider communal processes. For Erikson, personal development and community change are related to each other, and indeed, help to "define each other" (12). It is possible to think of historical, social, psychological and developmental forces working together at the communal and individual level in terms of a kind of "psychosocial relativity" (13). Here we see Erikson emphasizing again the interrelated nature of personal identity and the wider changes taking place in society. There is a sense in which *societies* are affirmed by the successful assimilation of new identifications on the part of adolescents. By eventually identifying with general social values and norms, communal life is 'recognised' in a much wider sense.

Identity, suggests Erikson, is located at the core of the individual, and by extension at the core of a person's communal culture. It is not difficult to see what he means here in relation to individuals. But in the culturally diverse society of Western cities today, any idea of an identity that can be located within a 'heart' of a culture appears more difficult to grasp. There are perhaps few people, except those living in closed communities, who can fully identify *in toto* with a shared cultural system.

Erikson suggests that we think of identity formation as an "evolving configuration" (14). This 'configuration' is gradually synthesized through an integration of "constitutional givens, idiosyncratic libidinal needs, favoured capacities, significant identifications, effective defenses, successful sublimations, and consistent roles" (15). Reaching a satisfactory personal identity is therefore subject to a vast range of variables. Awareness of a conscious identity will be at some times stronger than at others. Certain events, conflicts, or crises may heighten this awareness, and can be evident in certain behavioural expressions.

In his examination of *ideology* and identity, Erikson approaches the theme of this study...religion and identity. Ideology functions to give to youth a clear perspective of the foreseeable future and...

"a) an opportunity for the exhibition of some uniformity of appearance and action counteracting individual identity consciousness; b) inducements to collective role and work experimentation which can counteract a sense of inhibition and personal guilt; c) submission to leaders who as "big brothers" escape the ambivalence of the parent-child relation; d) a seeming correspondence between the internal world of ideals and evils, on the one hand, and, on the other, the outer world with its organised goals and dangers in real space and time: a geographic historical framework for the young individual's budding identity" (16).

Ideology and identity are two dimensions of the same process according to Erikson. They both play a part in the developing maturity of the individual and for the "next higher form of identification, namely, the *solidarity linking of common identities* (17). The tendencies within the adolescent for severe self-criticism and irrational self-disgust can make them particularly open to a paradoxical state of radicalism and at the same time conservatism. Ideologies can function to harness these compulsive energies and indeed, give them a sense of comprehension.

There may be times in individual or communal life where prevailing ideologies may no longer serve their purposes and their meanings become worn out. In these circumstances, when ideologies are under threat from stronger ideologies or questionings, it is at these times that humans will feel a corresponding threat to their identity. This may unleash a number of violent or non-violent defensive mechanisms. Erikson notes that many traditional group identities feel threatened by the economic and technological ideologies of modern life. This may bring to the surface all kinds of universal human vulnerabilities in the face of an apparent loss of "cosmic wholeness, providential planfulness, and of heavenly sanction for the means of production" (18). Seen in this way, the struggles of young people to find an identity, perhaps through religion, become more understandable.

Youth play a vital part in the ideological regeneration of societies. Before leaving this section on Erikson's contribution to the debate on identity, it would be helpful to finish with a quote that will become pertinent later in this thesis.

"To enter history, each generation of youth must find an identity consonant with its own childhood and consonant with an ideological promise in the perceptible historical process. But in youth the tables of childhood dependence begin slowly to turn: no longer is it merely for the old to teach the young the meaning of life. It is the young who, by their responses and actions, tell the old whether life as represented to them has some vital promise, and it is the young who carry in them the power to confirm those who confirm them, to renew and regenerate, to disavow what is rotten, to reform and rebel" (19).

Within this quote it is possible to identify the dynamics of some of the ideological trends that are currently perceptible within the young Muslim community in Britain, and which will be discussed later.

Other scholars have contributed to an understanding of identity. The work of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann has been mentioned earlier in this thesis. At this point, their work deserves further attention.

Identity, like the concept of society in Peter Berger's thought, is a dialectical phenomenon (20). Humankind have created societies and communities whose realities then reflect back upon the individual. So it is as a result of interaction "within society, and as a result of social processes, that the individual becomes a person, that he attains and holds onto an identity" (21). Thus Berger's approach to identity mainly focuses upon individual identity and its construction through social interaction.

Identity often becomes a 'taken for granted' objective reality for the individual. Institutions, identities, and roles, although human constructions, come to have the appearance of objectively real phenomena. Through the performance of social rituals, face-to-face situations of social interaction, conversations of gestures, and "interchanges of expressivity" (22), actors provide identity-reinforcing mechanisms for each other. The 'other' in conversation comes to have as much as, and sometimes more, reality than the self-awareness of the individual.

Berger and Luckmann call the human production of signs, 'signification'. While body movement and gesticulation are important signs, for them, language is the most important sign system.

"The language used in everyday life continuously provides the necessary objectifications. Language marks the co-ordinates of life in society and fills that life with meaningful objects" (23).

A language can become a vehicle for identity-maintenance in its capacity to become a repository for vast accumulations of meaningful memories and experiences. These then have the potential for transmission to successive generations. Language also has the capacity to transcend the 'here and now' of everyday life, though at the same time providing individuals with the means to locate themselves within social life. It can help inculcate effective strategies for participation in various institutions.

Identity is reinforced by repetitive and habitualized activity and interaction. The meanings behind various language and behaviour patterns become part of a general stock of knowledge that is taken for granted by an individual. Routines of action help to minimize the stress that can be caused by having to make constant choices and decisions. Institutions generally possess a body of transmitted knowledge and beliefs which define and construct the identity and roles that members absorb through socialization. Behaviour can be 'channeled' in certain directions, minimizing the threat of deviance from the knowledge that an institution claims. The transmission of institutional meanings from one generation to the next, constitutes an important part of the reinforcing of such meanings and thus the identity of the collectivity of individuals within the institution.

Some of the ideas explored by Berger and Luckmann are taken up by more specific 'social identity theorists', amongst whom are included scholars such as Henri Tajfel and Dominic Abrams (24). The essential hypothesis of these theorists is that "individuals define themselves in terms of their social group memberships and that group-defined self-perception produces psychologically distinctive effects in social behaviour" (25). In offering an understanding of group dynamics, it is possible to gain some appreciation of what it means to belong to a

group and derive one's identity from it. They also explore the irony of society's dependence on cohesion for social interactions while being so strongly marked in today's world by divisions and differences between individuals and groups.

It is possible to make some assessments of who someone is by examining the groups to which they belong. Therefore any examination of a person's identity must bear some reference to the organizations/memberships with which he or she associates. The focus is upon the *individual within a group*.

"Identity, specifically *social* identity, and group belongingness are inextricably linked in the sense that one's conception or definition of who one is (one's identity) is largely composed of self-descriptions in terms of the defining characteristics of social groups to which one belongs. Identification with a social group is a psychological state very different from merely being designated as falling into one social category or another" (26).

One cannot escape from the fact that different social categories in society exist in relation to each other, and they may have differing power and status. Individuals are located in certain social categories on the basis of nationality, religion, sex, class, or occupation. Of course, some of these categorizations may alter within the career of an individual. Categories themselves are not static entities, and may be subject to fluctuations.

Though located within a debate in philosophy between communitarianism and individualism, Alisdair MacIntyre offers a perspective that provides a fitting means to conclude this section.

"One understands one's life only by looking at one's actions within a story, a 'narrative'. But one's narrative converges with the narratives of other people, who come to be a part of one's own narrative. Thus an understanding of oneself can be attained only in the context of the community, that sets up the form and shape as well as the circumstances and the background of these narratives" (27).

Later this thesis will explore the settings of some of the 'narratives' within the British Muslim community.

2.2. Religion

The notion of **religion** in term of its nature, development, social impact, and function for individuals and groups is one of the central foundations for this research. There must be some basic understanding of what is meant by this term before later speaking of religious identity or religious pluralism. This section will explore: a) what does the word 'religion' convey?; b) the nearest Islamic term for religion is *din*...what does this mean?; c) where are the similarities or differences between the concept of 'religion' and *din*?; d) in what ways does 'Islam' fulfill criteria for definitions of 'religion'?

a) Definitions of religion have varied enormously in their scope. Encapsulating the meaning of religion within the confines of a few sentences has produced definitions that have ranged from being...

"substantive to functional...with views of religion as institutionalized systems of belief, symbols, values, and practices, which all relate to supernatural and otherworldly questions and forces, to definitions of religion as coping institutions to deal with the struggles of human existence and the ultimates of life" (28).

But as Peter Berger notes (29) there is no sense of 'truth' or 'falsity' in definitions, just differences in their utility. And as he goes on to point out, Max Weber felt justified in arguing that any definition, in this case of 'religion', should come at the end of one's investigations rather than at their outset. However, for this research, some definitions of religion particularly from a sociological perspective will serve to delineate our field of interest....religion and identity, and the particularly socio-psychological reality of religion.

Over the years during which definitions of religion have been offered, there has been an apparent difficulty in reaching a balance between meaningless general statements about religion, and narrow formulations which do not take into account the diversity of religious expressions. There sometimes appears to be a tension between the general and the specific. In his book *The World's Religions*, Ninian Smart proposed that there are a number of dimensions to the

phenomenon of religion. These are: the social or institutional; the doctrinal or philosophical; the mythical or narrative; the material; the ritual or practical; the experiential or emotional; and the ethical or legal dimension (30). It is not surprising then that many definitions of religion have focussed perhaps on one or other of these aspects, failing to fully take account of the others. Of course one may add other dimensions to this list, but Smart's analysis will be useful to keep in mind while considering in more detail what religion is, and later, how Islam fits onto the model of religion offered by Smart.

Perhaps a fitting starting point for a definition of religion would be to look at that offered by one of the most early and influential scholars of religion, Emile Durkheim. His definition of religion grasped its essential social nature, or as he put it, its nature as a "social fact". It also takes explicit account of the doctrinal and ritual dimensions.

"A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden - beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them" (31)

As a sociologist of religion, Meredith McGuire's definition of religion emphasizes its social and experiential function. It tells us more what its effects and consequences are, rather than what it is in itself.

"Religion is one of the most powerful, deeply felt, and influential forces in human society. It has shaped people's relationships with each other, influencing family, community, economic, and political life. Religious beliefs and values motivate human action, and religious groups organize their collective religious expressions. Religion is a significant aspect of social life, and the social dimension is an important part of religion" (32).

These two definitions point to the identity-forming capacity of religion: *beliefs* which define reality for a *group* of individuals who construct their lives and values around these beliefs and the group that adheres to them. Michael Novak offers a definition that highlights an identity dimension in the nature of religion, especially in terms of it being a personal choice amid diversity...

"I understand by the term 'religion', a root intention, an ultimate drive. Religion is the acting out of a vision of personal identity and human community. Religion is constituted by the most ultimate, least easily surrendered, most comprehensive choices a person or a society acts out. It is the living out of an intention, an option, a selection among life's possibilities" (33).

Religion presents the sociologist with a unique system of social interactions and structures, as well as with a wealth of various norms, beliefs and symbols. Religion is a good example of what Peter Berger calls 'world-building' whereby humans act collectively to construct "institutions, roles, and identities that are seen as objectively real phenomena in the social world" (34).

Are definitions, especially those determined by the milieu of Western culture, and particularly since the Reformation, narrowing the scope of religion? Have these trends to define religion thus made religion become more of a private personal matter in the contemporary world? Winston King identifies this tendency. He writes,

"The very attempt to define *religion*, to find some distinctive or possibly unique essence or set of qualities that distinguish the "religious" from the remainder of human life, is primarily a Western concern. The attempt is a natural consequence of the Western speculative, intellectualistic, and scientific disposition. It is also the product of the dominant Western religious mode" (35).

He goes on to suggest that this "mode" takes in the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition. To have included Islam in this "mode" of theism is perhaps a questionable addition as will be evident shortly.

b) In the religions of the East, and Islam in particular, religion is seen in a much broader context. The Islamic notion of *din* is far wider in its meaning than our word 'religion' as the latter is conventionally used. The sacred and the profane are seen as one endeavour by the Muslim, and their *din* - way of life, is directed by the overarching concept of *tawhid* (unity). *Din* has been translated in a number of ways. At a simple level, many understand it to mean simply 'religion', but looking again at this concept, it has far wider implications. *The Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam* offers as a meaning

for *din*, "a religion together with its practices in general" (36). Taking the meaning of the word to its deeper level, *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (37), suggests that *din* can mean...

"1) judgement, retribution; 2) custom, usage; 3) religion. The concept indicated by *din* does not exactly coincide with the ordinary concept of 'religion', precisely because of the semantic connections of the words. *Religio* evokes primarily that which binds man to God; and *din* the obligations which God imposes on His 'reasoning creatures'" (38).

The primary obligation is as the term '*Islam*' suggests, submission to God. Beyond this, various schools of Islamic thought differ in the nuances of meaning that the term *din* can evoke. For example, the Muslim Brethren suggest that Islam is both religion (*din*) and government/politics (*dawla*) (39). Other scholars also emphasise the concern of *din* with temporal matters (40) as well as spiritual. In Yusuf Ali's translation of the *Qur'an*, he writes as a commentary for *Surah* 2.193 where the word religion is given, "the Arabic word is *din*, which is comprehensive. It implies the ideas of indebtedness, duty, obedience, justice, faith, religion, customary rites, etc." (41).

c) But the Latin word '*religio*', if seen in a wider sense can be seen to correspond in some way to the Arabic '*din*'. T.B. Irving proposes that, "the Arabic word for 'religion' is *din*, which means something we 'owe' to God, much like the Latin concept of *religio* meaning something 'binding (us) back' to God" (42). So it is perhaps the 'Western' *definitions of religion* which appear to define religion too narrowly from its Latin root *religio*, and thus fail to take account of its inclusiveness. It is clear that in some ways *din* and *religio* can have similar meanings. But when Western scholars have proceeded to explain and describe 'religion', they have limited its meaning to the purely 'sacred' realm of life, and have made too sharp a distinction between the spiritual and the secular. It is perhaps a consequence of the suggestion made by Winston King above. For example, Durkheim's definition of religion does not entirely encapsulate the Islamic term *din*. While Islam can be thought of as a religion in that it has a "unified system of beliefs and practices" (43) as he suggests, these are not related strictly to a 'sacred' world separate from the 'profane'. In Islam, such distinctions do not occur.

"...the inclusive sovereignty of God is held to pervade the whole of life. Islam does not accept the interpretation of religion that allows it to be understood as a branch of human life, a piece of personal privacy, or the area of existence that relates to God" (44).

Islam is thus for many a complete way of life. Suzanne Haneef describes this particularly well.

"Islam is not a mere belief system nor a 'religion' is the commonly understood sense of the word. Rather it is a *deen*: a total frame of reference, a complete system and way of life which embraces the entirety of man's existence" (45).

In the light of this, one feels like adding a further dimension to Smart's list. It is as if another aspect of religion - one that takes its all-encompassing nature, certainly for a Muslim - should be taken into account. This could perhaps be called the *incorporative* dimension that religion can have not only for a Muslim, but for members of other traditions for whom Smarts' dimensions embody and encapsulate their whole lives. Michael Novak again...

"Thinkers who like their subject matter pure are inevitably disappointed by their attempts to abstract religion from the stream of life, in order to give it a clear, distinct definition in itself" (46).

Religion, according to Durkheim served to unite believers into a "single moral community". But for the Muslim, while part of a worldwide *ummah* (community), by virtue of their faith, Islam is not "confined to any particular community....it is a universal religion" (47).

d) Having explored some of the ways in which understanding of *din* and 'religion' converge and diverge in their meanings, it would be interesting to see how Islam fits into definitions of religion. The strengths and weaknesses of Durkheim's definition in this respect (ie. Islam is a "unified system of beliefs and practices" but these are not related purely to a "sacred" world) have already been examined. So now there is a need to examine what is meant by *Islam* and whether more recent definitions of religion encompass its being a 'way of life'.

Islam has its foundations in the Judeo-Christian tradition. The Prophets of the Jews and the Christians have their place in the revelations received by the Prophet Muhammad between 610-632 C.E. in Saudi Arabia. But Muhammad is regarded as the 'Seal of the Prophets', being the final Messenger of God before the end of the world. His mission was to act as a medium through which Allah could communicate His message to humankind. Furthermore, Muhammad in many ways served as a living human embodiment of these revelations, collected together after his death in the *Qur'an* and *sunnah*.

The beliefs and practices of Islam are known as the *aqidah* and the *arkan*. There are five essential beliefs which a Muslim - one who is submitted to God - must hold. Firstly, they must believe in God and His Oneness. This has wide implications, since it serves as a basis for all activities of life, and God is recognised before undertaking a whole range of everyday activities. Part of the nature of Allah is as 'the Unknown'. So secondly, in order to understand more about the spiritual world and the values necessary for life, revelation is needed from God to explicitly state the relationship between God and humanity, between human beings, and between humans and the natural world. Something or someone must act as a medium through which God can communicate his message. Thirdly therefore, Muslims believe in the succession of Prophets from Adam to Muhammad. The fourth conviction of a Muslim is belief in the unseen world, and all those things that are beyond understanding. Fifthly, a Muslim holds to a belief in a life after death.

These five beliefs must translate into action in order to be fulfilled. Verbal witness to the Oneness of Allah is a primary duty of a Muslim. Following on from this, a Muslim must be prepared to turn his or her attention to God at various times of the day in prayer. To increase particular awareness of God and the spiritual life, and to demonstrate solidarity with the poorest of the world, fasting is undertaken during the month of Ramadan. Taking account again of those less fortunate than oneself, and to be reminded of one's essentially dependent relationship upon God's providence, 2.5% of one's wealth is distributed to the poor annually. These daily and annual practices

find their fulfillment perhaps in the once-in-a-lifetime duty of a Muslim to visit the Ka'bah in Mecca at some point in their life. While these various practices constitute the essential ways of living out one's faith, they are subject to various conditions and circumstances that may affect their implementation. For some, the practices of the *arkan* must be underpinned at all times by *jihad* or struggle. Thus as individuals, and as a community of believers, Muslims must endeavour to improve their awareness of God (*taqwa*), their understanding of Islam, and to communicate the message of Muhammad to their fellow human beings. The essential relationship for a Muslim is between him or herself and Allah. But by virtue of one's identity as a Muslim, this relationship to God must extend to take account of other Muslims and the social arrangements ordained by God for the procreation of other human beings. Therefore, the worldwide community of believers - the *ummah*, and institutions such as the family, form the basis for the interaction of Muslims with each other.

Returning to the dimensions of religion outlined by Ninian Smart at the beginning of this chapter, it is possible to see that Islam can be characterized as a religion along the lines he suggests. Islam has its doctrinal dimension encapsulated within the *aqidah*. The accounts of the life of Muhammad can be viewed as making up the narrative dimension, while the ritual dimension can be identified in the practices of the *arkan*. The emotional or experiential dimension of Islam can be primarily identified in the revelations received by Muhammad, and then latter in the experiences of Muslims as a result. The ethical or legal dimension of Islam can be found within the *shari'ah* in particular. The social or institutional aspect is identifiable in a number of guises. The family is of paramount importance within Islam, followed by the collectivities of Muslims in other religious settings, whether at mosques, in Mecca, or at other places of pilgrimage. From the small scale institution, to the worldwide community of believers - the *ummah*, Islam is perhaps the religion *par excellence* where the social dimension is particularly evident. The material dimension can be identified in the buildings, arts, places of pilgrimage, and other creations that have arisen by virtue of the existence of the tradition. Finally, examining the incorporative dimension of Islam, it is possible to see that it touches

upon a range of activities. Whether eating, sleeping, interacting with others at a variety of levels, or simply to bring an awareness of God into one's everyday actions, Islam has a range of short phrases, *dua's* or Qur'anic recitations appropriate to various situations which enable a Muslim to turn their attention to God and dedicate their daily activities to Him.

For any definition of religion to take in all these aspects of religion is something of a tall order. Attempts to define religion will naturally vary according to the academic discipline from which a scholar is working. For example, Islam would not fit into many of the definitions of religion offered by those working in the field of primitive religions. In many cases the strict monotheism of Islam would be lost to "beliefs in superhuman beings and their power to assist or harm man" (48). Sociologists of religion will often tend to define religion in terms of its functional value to society, such as its ability to provide social stability, or consensus on basic human norms and values. This will rarely tell us what religion is, but rather what its effects are (49). For example, Talcott Parsons sees religion as, "guidelines for human action...(and) answering man's questions about himself and the world he lives in" (50). Since this research is concerned in part with the effect that religion has in conferring identity, its social or human impact is of particular importance. This being the case, a further definition, this time from an anthropologist will perhaps offer an alternative and more suitable definition of religion. Clifford Geertz writes,

"a religion is 1) a system of symbols which acts to 2) establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by 3) formulating concepts of a general order of existence 4) and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that 5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic" (51).

The particular strength of this definition is that the second element of it captures the apparent incorporative dimension of faith so strong in Islam. The downside of this conception of religion, especially with Islam in mind is that the social aspect appears to have little, if any, mention. Simply to prefix this definition with mention of religion as an institution would have made it practicable for this study. Later it

will become clear that there is a need to unpack the ways in which religion confers identity, and recognition of the social aspect is paramount.

Religion is perhaps too complicated a phenomena to define with any precision. Besides giving us 'clues', it seems that no definition alone will convey what religion is. This is particularly the case in view of the incredible diversity not only between religions but also within them. Furthermore, as Peter Byrne argues in his discussion on defining religion,

"there is limitless scope for novelty and for receptivity to the differing influences of time and place amongst human beings. It is the humanity of religion and the religions which commands that we begin our study with an open-ended definition of religion...(as) an institution with a complex of theoretical, practical, sociological and experiential dimensions, which is distinguished by characteristic object (gods or sacred things), goals (salvation or ultimate good) and functions (giving an overall meaning to life or providing identity or cohesion of a social group)" (52).

This appears to be one of the most comprehensive definitions of religion currently available. From the discussion earlier of how Islam fits into Ninian Smart's dimensions of religion, it is possible to see how this definition could serve a similar purpose to Smart's dimensions. But such broad definitions are perhaps unhelpful in an attempt to discover more about a particular faith tradition. Melford E. Spiro notes the difficulty in finding a definition that is both precise and inclusive of all religious expression. "If it indeed be the case that Theravada Buddhism is atheistic and that, by a theistic definition of religion, is therefore not a religion, why can we not face, rather than shrink from this consequence?" (53).

In other words, the more one defines religion with a particular tradition in mind, the greater the risk of excluding other faiths. Any definition made with an awareness of the diversity of religions will by necessity be vague. But this nonetheless makes it a useful starting-point for more detailed analysis. It sets in motion an analysis which untangles the shared as opposed to the unique elements of different faiths.

It seems inevitable then that in order to understand what is meant by religion a definition that has Islam in mind would be helpful. What then is Islam beyond the dimensions outlined in some of the earlier definitions? What makes Islam a *din*?

The concept of *tawhid* forms the underlying basis for much Islamic theology and practice. As Sayyid Qutb once wrote,

"Islam looks at man as forming a unity whose spiritual desires cannot be separated from his bodily appetites, and whose moral needs cannot be divorced from his material needs. It looks at the world and at life with this all-embracing view which permits of no separation or division" (54).

Any examination of Islam, or any attempt to define it, must be set against the all-pervading sense of *tawhid* that underlies the psyche of Muslims, and the theology that orientates their lives. The concept of *tawhid* flows primarily from the strict monotheism of Islam. Surah *al-Baqarah* vs. 163 in the Qur'an explicitly states: "And your God is One God: there is no god but He, Most Gracious, Most Merciful".

This has been interpreted in a number of ways, but perhaps the most generally accepted understanding is that there is nothing that exists outside of God Himself (55). God is One, humankind are one in terms of their origins and destiny, and religion is a unity. This concept is then perhaps one of the defining characteristics of Islam. Many of the actions and rituals of Islam bear out in practical form this essential *tawhid*. The idea of the doctrine must find active expression. The *Shahadah* establishes this verbally. *Salat*, is both verbal and physical, linking the disparate dimensions of human consciousness. Even the preparation for prayer - *wudu* - is something of a physical metaphor for the role that prayer is meant to play in re-establishing an awareness of the Divine in worldly life. The offering of 2.5% of one's wealth can enhance a feeling of solidarity with other human beings. All stand as equals before Allah, members of one human race where ultimately rank and station count for little. Muhammad Asad notes how *tawhid* fits into the ritual of *tawaf* on the *hajj* in Makka.

"If we move in a circle around some object we thereby establish that object as the central point of our action. The *Ka'bah* towards which every Muslim turns his face in prayer, symbolizes the Oneness of God...the *tawaf* implies that not only our devotional thoughts but also our practical life, our actions and endeavours, must have the idea of God and His Oneness for their centre" (56).

It is clear then, that *tawhid* is of central importance in Islam, and any general definition of religion is likely to miss this underpinning element of Islam. Whilst most religions include worship as an element of practice, devotion will similarly have many different intentions and goals. In Islam, it is the element of combining every aspect of life into worship that perhaps sets it apart from other faiths. The unity of God must be reflected in a whole and unified life-course.

2.3. Religions Identity

Having considered various perspectives on the nature of identity in general, and the concept of religion, it is now possible to explore in depth what is meant by the notion of 'religious identity'. To this end, the work of Hans Mol is of central importance, and his ideas will now be discussed in some detail.

Mol's key work in which his theory of religion and identity is explained is *Identity and the Sacred*. The following pages will systematically outline the basic arguments expounded by Mol, and where appropriate, reference will be made to those themes which are of direct relevance to identity issues for Muslims in Britain. The originality of Mol's work lies in the fact that he integrates a variety of approaches to the study of religion and identity: the anthropological, historical, psychological, and sociological. Very simply, Mol argues that "religion is the sacralization of identity and that the mechanisms of sacralization consist of objectification, commitment, ritual, and myth" (57). The following pages will discuss these dynamics of religious identity construction and maintenance.

In Mol's terms, 'sacralization' refers to the process whereby on the "level of symbol systems, certain patterns acquire the same taken-for-granted, stable, eternal, quality" (58). Given the complexity of

identity choices that are possible to an individual, the 'sacralization of identity' is a mechanism to protect humankind from potential threats to that identity. It helps the individual to find some sense of location and stability amid the sociological, psychological and physiological patterns of interaction.

"Sacralization is the inevitable process that safeguards identity when it is endangered by the disadvantages of the infinite adaptability of symbol-systems. Sacralization protects identity, a system of meaning, or a definition of reality, and modifies, obstructs, or (if necessary) legitimates change" (59).

Mol's conception of religion as the 'sacralization of identity' has a number of important methodological consequences. The first of these is that he talks not of a separate sacred/profane dichotomy, but of sacralization as a *process*. In the face of the rapidity of change in modern Western society, his definition allows for emphasis not so much on static religious identity or 'being', but on development and adaptation. He suggests that there are two fundamental needs within humankind: a) identity, and b) the ability to alter or evolve this identity in the face of changing circumstances. Here Mol touches one of the central ideas of this thesis, and this is, how is identity - religious and otherwise - developing for young Muslims in Britain given the markedly different social context in which they have been brought up compared to their parents?

"Sometimes personal and social identity were too well sacralized, with the result that cultures become extinct when mechanisms for adaptation had become atrophied. At other times, such as our own, there are many complaints that there is too much change and that there are no traditions left to give continuity to one's identity" (60).

It is the generation of young Muslims in Britain who will perhaps be at the sharpest end of this kind of dialectic living within the traditional orientation of their parents and communities, and the changeability, plurality, and modernizing forces of their wider social context. This therefore makes a study of their particular identity and religious identity 'options' and problems even more interesting and urgent.

Of the four mechanisms for the 'sacralization of identity', the process of 'objectification' is for Mol the most important. By this term he refers to "the tendency to sum up the variegated elements of mundane existence in a transcendental point of reference where they can appear more orderly, more consistent, and more timeless" (61). Closely allied to objectification is commitment. For him this means "emotional attachment to a specific focus of identity (and an) anchoring of the emotions in a salient system of meaning, social, group, or personal whether abstract or concrete" (62). It is through commitment that bonds of social and personal unity are reinforced. Allegiance to a central focus of identity is likely to promote consistent behaviour. The values and norms of a group become more predictable and secure. Quite simply, commitment reinforces identity. A necessary aid to commitment is, as Otto calls it, the numinous. Awe and reverence "enforce emotional commitment", suggests Geertz (63). To the adherents of a religious tradition, commitment might be better known as *faith*. Sacrifice is a part of the commitment process, translating faith into action. "It reinforces a system of meaning or an identity by clarifying principles, (and) given time, develops into awe which wraps the system in 'don't touch' sentiments" (64). So for example, the Muslim who undergoes the self-sacrifice involved in fasting reinforces Islamic identity and commitment.

Mol has something to say about commitment and sacrifice in relation to plural societies. His comments strike at the very heart of the arguments and ideas which are central to this thesis. It is worth quoting in full one particular paragraph, since later on it will be referred to and expanded upon in some detail.

"Sacrifice is a form of commitment which clarifies priorities in a hierarchy of potentially competing meanings. In pluralistic societies, the actual competition between a large variety of foci of identity has created dilemmas of commitment. Certain foci of identity are dislodged in the competitive battle, but those that survive tend to become stronger through successful boundary defence. Lack of commitment, lack of identity, meaninglessness, anomie and alienation are all very much related symptoms of societies in which definitions of reality are no longer taken for granted because competition has relativized each and all of them. If, at the end of the twentieth century, the traditional categories of the Judeo-Christian heritage seem to be less

successful in providing the major platform of identity construction, it may be because they have to share this function with numerous other foci of identity that have emerged in the wake of the unprecedented success of the forced of differentiation, rationality, individualism, which make man the undisputed master and manipulator of his physical environment" (65).

Later in this thesis, some of the consequences of this for young Muslims in Britain will be examined.

Moving on from commitment as a mechanism in the sacralization of identity, the third factor which Mol considers is that of ritual. Ritual has the function of ordering human life, and strengthening the bonds between an individual and the rest of a group or society. The repetition of actions which arouse certain emotions evoke a sense of inner integration within the individual, and cohesion between individuals. At particular times of individual or group stress where identity may be threatened, ritual can function to protect an old identity and yet shape a new one. Rituals are defined by Mol as "repetitive enactment of human systems of meaning. They act out and sacralize sameness. They restore, reinforce, or re-direct identity" (66). Rites are a way of bringing to mind the tenets of faith, linking the past to the present, while at the same time directing action towards the future. They can provide a wholeness to life, and feelings of security. Rituals come into their own when they are manifested as rites of passage.

The fourth and final dimension of the sacralization of identity is what can be grouped under Mol's heading "myth, theology, and religious symbolism" (67). According to him, myths explain reality. "They provide the fitting contour for existence...and reinforce identity" (68). The sacralizing function arises through the repetitive narration of the myths and theological constructs of a religious tradition. To be effective, myths must evoke certain emotional responses, in order to 'emotionally anchor' the believer, and thus commitment is linked with myth. "Myths relativize discordance through emotional sublimation and provide objectification of basic experiences through emotional displacements" (69). At the social level, the integration of individual emotions and affections through myth, means that it has important social and community functions. The cohesion of society depends to

some extent on myth according to the anthropologist Radcliffe-Brown (70). Myths, he said, "serve to express ways of thinking and feeling about the society and its relation to the world of nature, and thereby to maintain these ways of thought and feeling and pass them on the succeeding generations" (71).

Myths thus have some part to play in the construction and maintenance of religious identity through generations of believers. The same may also be said of theological beliefs, which, like myths, reinforce definitions of reality.

"Religious practices give special underpinning to particular conceptions of order and views of reality within a culture, thus making the security of the individual less precarious" (72). Such practices, and the interpretation of reality that lies behind them, can reinforce feelings of personal *continuity*. This quality is a necessary pre-requisite for identity, as outlined earlier when psychological theories of identity were examined. Legitimation is another such requisite. A religion has the potential to justify various norms and values, as well as socializing agencies such as the family, and the political order.

Mol suggests, "the family constructs identity, and religion sacralizes it" (73). Through parental influence, a young person will learn how to view the world, how to interact with others, and what values are of prime importance. Religion plays a significant part in sacralizing family relationships and maintaining the boundaries of social cohesion. Sacred codes safeguard the family and the threats to identity that changes in the family structure can initiate. Birth, marriage, and death are recognised in various religions as times at which an old identity must be stripped away, and a new one sacralized. Rites of passage act as legitimating techniques to usher in a new identity, when the old one has been discarded.

In the second part of Mol's work he concentrates on what he calls the 'foci' of identity. He gives some examples of important foci such as class or the family, which can give a "unifying focus" (74) to one's life or, as William James put it, a "habitual centre of personal

energy" (75). There has already been a lengthy discussion about personal identity, but Mol offers some analysis of group and social identity where these have an impact for individual identity. Group identity refers to tightly knit religious and ethnic coteries which offer "definite, distinguishable islands in a stormy cultural ocean, separate from others through their cosmic interpretations" (76). On the other hand, social identity is "whatever provides a society, tribe, or nation with its own unique wholeness" (77).

Mol spends some time considering **group identity** in relation to ethnic communities. A partial diversion away from religion and identity is worthwhile here, since many of Britain's Muslims are members of different ethnic groups. Such coteries, suggests Mol, "do not generally forge a new identity but preserve an old one" (78). This is achieved largely through emotional attachments, and serve an important function of...

"protecting individual immigrants from the acculturation demands of the host society. By creating a home away from home they preserve an old world identity in the new country. In the countries of immigration, migrant churches have always been the most effective bastions of ethnic preservation. More often than not they were and are at the centre of the organized social activities of immigrant groups" (79).

Attachment to an ethnic group may go hand in hand with sectarian allegiances. Many mosques in Britain have built up around the cultural and linguistic identity of a community. For example, Bangladeshis will attend, by and large, one mosque where besides Arabic, Bengali will be the main spoken language, while Pakistanis will attend a different one, with Urdu as a principle language medium. Such commitments may provide a means to protect "identity fragilities in the mundane situation of a minority" (80). Group identity dynamics can create "islands of meaning to counterbalance the disrupting influence of marginality" (81). Where social identity has been eroded in pluralistic societies, and where personal identity is threatened by anomy, the ethnic/religious group comes to the psychological rescue.

The threat to specific frames of identity through the process of immigration can lead to an invigoration of old traditions, and thus a strengthening of identity. Challenge can perhaps bring out the best in people. Ibn Khaldun notes how the challenges of desert life had a cohesive effect on Bedouin tribes, while the relative ease of urban life weakened solidarity (82). He contends that religion can develop unity "many times over" (83), and he attributed the "rapid and sweeping conquests of the Muslim Arabs in the seventh century A.D. to the formidable combinations of religious and tribal solidarity" (84). In the second volume of *The Muqaddimah*, Khaldun notes the necessity of 'group-feeling' for the strength of religion (85). From this, we can infer something about religious identity.

Mol spends a considerable amount of time discussing identity and alienation and marginality. His reflections are highly relevant for the study of Muslim identity in Britain. "Marginality", he proposes, refers to "persons or groups who stand on the boundary of larger groups or societies, neither completely belonging nor suffering outright rejection. Migrants are often marginal people" (86). He considers identity and marginality since, "being treated as alien or refusing to adopt the ways of a new country has an adverse effect on the sense of belonging" (87). This can lead to innovation, or, more negatively, feelings of rootlessness, and so on. The inability to feel a sense of belonging to the wider society can lead to more rigid adherence to other foci of identity like religion, culture, and the past. In many ways, the universal religions based upon Judaic foundations, have complex mechanisms for dealing effectively with change and marginality. The experience of the Exodus for the Jews will have corresponding emotional parallels in the early history of Islam. Exile, migration, minority status, and conquests are part of the collective conscience of Muslims. The Judaeo-Christian-Muslim religions "legitimated marginality...and provided a baseline for the construction of new forms of identity" (88).

Identity is related to the idea of *boundaries*. A community that has located itself in a stable niche of social life will identify its boundaries in order to "define itself, set it off from its environment, and give it a sharp focus" (89). The more vulnerable a group is, the

more likely it is that boundary-maintenance will be strong. Various techniques are used to construct and preserve boundaries. Individuals, buildings, and cultural symbols, amongst other things, can be used to sharpen the focus of a socio-religious unit. In a later chapter, some of the mechanisms for boundary-maintenance that have been used by the British Muslim community will be explored.

The International Association for the History of Religions held its fifteenth conference at the University of Sydney, Australia, in 1985. The theme, 'Religion and Identity', resulted in a variety of papers being presented, and subsequently published under the Editorship of Victor Hayes (90). As Hayes himself stated, and was later echoed by Hans Mol who gave the keynote address at the Conference...

"identity...may suggest something static, but in these papers identity is associated with dynamic temporal process. Authors speak of it as being lost, sought, found and maintained; as being stripped away, re-established, reconstructed and transformed. Identities are said to compete, help, threaten, jostle and reinforce one another; they collide, adapt, intersect and become entangled" (91).

Nearly all these characteristics have relevance and application to the identity issues that face Muslims in Britain, as a religious minority in a secular and plural society.

2.4. Factors contributing to identity

It is clear from what Mol and other identity theorists have stated, that an identity is constructed in a social environment. Therefore, an understanding of the concept of **community** is important, since it is within a communal group setting that identity is formed, shaped and maintained. The following pages will therefore explore what is meant by community, and how Muslims in Britain may be regarded as a community. Alongside 'Western' definitions and understandings of community, Islam has a conception of its own, namely, the *ummah*. The worldwide community of Muslims plays some part in the religious identity of an individual believer. The dynamics of this will be discussed later, but at this stage an attempt will simply be made to

try to uncover the meaning of *ummah* in terms of its characteristics and theological foundation.

Sociologist Peter Worsley observes, "the term community can evoke such varied images, we must question whether it has any value" (92). The treatment this term has received has been in some instances too general and in others too narrow, often as a consequence of the rationale behind its usage. But in this study, it is necessary to identify those elements that make up a community which have relevance for study of the Muslims in Britain. Reference to geographical location is often included in definitions of community, as is..."political autonomy, a sense of fellowship, a uniform set of religious beliefs, perhaps ethnic homogeneity, and often a particular dominant occupational function" (93).

There are many other criteria that could be added to this list. For example, the self-sufficiency of a group of people may result in them cohering into a community. Their cultural or social distinctiveness may unite them in a way that other factors named above may not. Furthermore, an already distinctive community may have many sub-communities within it where different and more specific factors are joining people together. Instead of being simply basic social units, communities may be "overlapping and multiple sets of social relations within a variety of geographical locations" (94). This is a reminder that a community of interrelated social ties is less likely to have the harmony and cohesiveness that the term 'community' may imply. Where networks of individuals are interacting, there are bound to be instances of conflict and tension, simply by virtue of close proximity.

Many other definitions of community have been offered. R.M. MacIver and Charles Page suggest that...

"wherever the members of any group, small or large, live together in such a way that they share, not this or that particular interest, but the basic conditions of a common life, we call that group a community. Some communities are all-inclusive and independent of others. The bases of community are *locality* and *community sentiment* (or) a strong bond of solidarity" (95).

Those sociologists and anthropologists who have endeavored to define community have accorded different value to, on the one hand, location or territory, and on the other local culture, experience or sentiments. For different scholars, some features would appear to be of more significance for the existence of a community than others. For example, Louis Wirth suggests that one can think of community as a "constellation of institutions" (96). Thus, the schools, religious associations, businesses, and leisure facilities may be regarded specifically as community institutions. It is by no means self-evident therefore what is precisely meant by community.

R. Frankenberg (97) has argued that description and examination of 'dramatic occurrences', by which he means special events or ceremonies, can tell us much about community life. It is in such circumstances where the dynamics of communal existence may be more easily identified. But clearly, such times may also be ones of stress and tension, and may not represent the normal attitudes and motivations of a community. However, there is much to be gained by examining a community both at particular times, and during the round of daily life. The remainder of this section will thus explore those criteria cited earlier by which a community may be identified, and also how exceptional events may throw a community into sharp relief. This will be done with the British Muslim community in mind. So how, if at all, do they constitute a community, and what have events such as the Rushdie affair and the Gulf War told us about how British Muslims form a community?

To some extent, the preliminaries for such an investigation have already been carried out by Peter Reed in his study of Muslim adolescent boys in Batley in 1974 (98). He relies on David Clark's (99) understanding of community as being rooted in locality, social activity, social structure, and sentiment. Many of these criteria accord with those cited earlier, and some considerable emphasis is placed upon the psychological factors that draw a group of people together. Reed suggests that the Batley Muslims constitute a community by virtue of their origins, location in Batley, and their ethnic identity, and in this latter criterion, religion is included.

Along similar lines, Saifullah-Khan's study of Pakistani villagers in Bradford (100), suggests at what level the term community is applicable to those Pakistanis living in Britain. Examining the factor of location, Britain's Pakistani Muslims constitute a community at the local level only. There is no one area in this country in which they are based, though there may be particular locations in which there is a high population. In terms of interaction and social activity, there are many instances where Muslims are drawn together, whether for prayer, work, or for social events. There have developed over the past three decades numerous organizations and associations aimed at fulfilling the social, spiritual, welfare, economic, and political needs of the Muslims in Britain. Many locations in which there is a high percentage of Muslims have community facilities, whether mosques or cultural centres, which draw many members together. However, it is in terms of community sentiment where Saifullah-Khan and Reed appear to radically disagree. Reed suggests that by acting as a "self-conscious social entity, receiving benefits in terms of solidarity and significance" (101), the Batley Muslims can be considered to constitute a community. In contrast Saifullah-Khan suggests that in the normal course of events, Britain's Pakistani Muslims, even within a single location, do not form a community where communal sentiment is the central criteria. She proposes that the widely divergent backgrounds of those living in an area - whether of rural, or urban origins - have resulted in different aims and values since living in Britain. So for example, a peasant migrant from Mirpur will find identification primarily from among kin, whilst the urban migrant elite from a city is likely to identify more with the values of middle class British society. Farhana Sheikh expresses this particularly well in her novel *The Red Box*.

"My family did not belong to an 'Asian' community. We didn't really participate in the Eid festivals; we didn't attend weddings or funerals; there were few meetings with fellow 'Asians'. The links only appeared when we were hosts to visiting relatives. Family friends were a cosmopolitan set - from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Egypt, the States, France, Iran, Germany, England. My friends, some of them close, were all English. They had more in common with me than with girls like Judy Butlin; I had more in common with them than with girls like Rezwana Shah" (102).

In conclusion, Saifullah-Khan answers the question 'to what extent are Pakistanis a community?' by replying,

"on the national level no characteristic stands, except the common feeling of national and religious identification. Even this, however, is latent; only expressed when initiated by some incident or issue. On the local level, the other characteristics of community are apparent to a degree" (103).

It would appear that any talk of a unified Muslim community in Britain would be better replaced by the idea of a diversity of sub-communities, varying according to their location and social aspirations. However, at the time in which Reed and Saifullah-Khan were writing nearly twenty years ago, Britain's Muslims were at a very different stage of development. The past five years or so have heralded events of significance for Muslims of all backgrounds, locations and sentiments, and the factor of identification as a religious community, mentioned in the above quotation, appears to have lost its latency.

The Rushdie affair was perhaps the first event which drew Muslims, even those who claimed this term/label for identificational purposes without formally practicing Islam, together in terms of sentiment. It was as if something was at stake that required British Muslims to emerge from their self-sufficient communities. There was a realization that action beyond the local level was required in order to make their voices heard. It was perhaps in the wake of this event, followed closely by the Gulf War, that has enabled scholars to more accurately speak of a Muslim community in Britain. While diversity will always characterize the British Muslim community by virtue of its differing languages, ethnic backgrounds, religious orientations, and varying customs, the element of community based on sentiment, and specifically in terms of religion appears to be over-riding these other particularities in the light of recent historical events. Later this study will explore some of the dynamics that have resulted in this religious identity coming to the foreground. It only remains to mention here that in some aspects, Britain's Muslims are demonstrating more evidence of being a community than in the early days of its existence during the 1960's and 1970's.

Having seen how Muslims in Britain constitute something of a community according to 'Western' definitions, with numerous groups/sub-communities within it, Islam itself provides its adherents with a ready-made community due to its having followers worldwide. By virtue of being a Muslim, each one is a member of the *ummah*. The concept of *ummah* has been defined in the *Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam* as, "a people, a community; or a nation, in particular the "nation" of Islam which transcends ethnic or political definition" (104). There are many instances in which the word is used in the *Qur'an* so as to make any precise definition problematic. But basically it seems "certain that it always refers to ethnical, linguistic or religious bodies of people who are the objects of the divine plan of salvation" (105). Commonality of purpose or values appears to be the essential basis for an *ummah*. But it is possible to consider the *ummah* as consisting of many levels. The *Qur'an* states in *Surah Yunus* vs. 19, "Mankind was but one nation, but differed (later)". In other words, the human community is in some senses a universal *ummah* with many smaller groups within it.

There are varying senses with which the word *ummah* is used in the *Qur'an*. According to Abdullah al-Ahsan, it can refer also to "the exemplar of an ideological group of people, a specific length of time of a community, or a committed group of people within a large community" (106). He notes the importance of distinguishing between the word *ummah* and the notion of *qawm* which denotes a whole community in a much wider and more general sense. A *qawm* is less likely to have the foundations for ideological unity, unlike an *ummah*.

References to the word *ummah* are generally used in connection with entire groups of people, or smaller communities within a group. In the early days of the Islamic community, Muhammad had "transformed the *umma* of the Arabs into an *umma* of the Muslims (where) the essential thing was the religious foundation on which it was based" (107). This being the case, the Islamic *ummah* has something of a universal dimension in that it is not based exclusively on race, language or nation. It is thus a concept that draws Muslims together, based on shared beliefs, into a community without any

specific geographical location or boundary. "Islam fostered in the hearts of those various peoples a strong feeling of brotherhood and a sense of harmony through a wider and higher concept of community" (108). But despite this universalism of the Muslim community, there is awareness within the *Qur'an* of diversity along cultural and national lines in, for example, *Surah Hujurat* vs.13. However, language functioned to cement the social bonds between Muslims. It "became an invisible bond between diverse clans and formed, whether consciously or not, the basis of a national community of sentiment" (109). Even for Muslims today, living in all the corners of the world, the Arabic language is the mainstay of their prayer and greetings. However, even though from its earliest days the members of the *ummah* have had a diversity of ancestry and customs, because

"(the) *ummah* did not abolish tribal identity; it only changed the hierarchy of an individual's identities in society. In essence, the tribal identity of the individual was of secondary importance to an *ummah* identity" (110).

While this may be the case in theory, for many members of the Muslim *ummah* today their ethnic, regional, or national identity ranks higher than their religious identity. Many Pakistanis will often identify themselves firstly according to their location in Pakistan before their identity as Muslims. Thus it seems that the ideology of the nation-state creates some degree of conflict between ideals and realities in the identificational hierarchy of some Muslims.

Again, it is perhaps at times of tension that the notion of a universal *ummah* becomes more apparent. Although many of the conflicts in the world are accorded different priorities according to political or economic factors, there is a sense that persecution or violence towards Muslims in any part of the world will result in concern from other members of the *ummah*. Awareness on the part of a Muslim of being a member of the *ummah* is however extremely variable. But again, an event such as the Rushdie affair caused ripples throughout the Muslim world, uniting believers to stand up to the challenges that the *Satanic Verses* presented. At a time such as this, many Muslims demonstrated some affinity and identification with an *ummah* and its values. Other demonstrations of this sense of being a religious community have found expression in the organizations that have been

formed to represent Muslims throughout the world. The Organisation of the Islamic Conference is one example (111). However, it is the Ka'bah in Makkah which perhaps provides the greatest symbol of the *ummah* in establishing a "physical identity" (112) for the Muslim community. In all times and circumstances, it is a tremendous symbol of *community* that millions of people should at the same time face the same point on the earth's surface for prayer.

It is clear then that in many senses, Muslims throughout the world form an *ummah*. Based on their shared belief in the essential message of Islam, they cohere together into a spiritual community, marked however by national, linguistic, ethnic and social differences. Britain's Muslims are a part of this worldwide community, though in this country they form a minority group. It is this concept of **minority** that will now be explored. It is an idea that forms an essential backdrop for an understanding of the religious identity of Muslims in Britain. Their identity has to be established against this status of being a minority. Again, the dynamics of this will be examined in more detail later, but for now there must be some understanding of what is meant by a **minority**.

Followers of Islam in Britain constitute a sizeable religious **minority**. This term, notes Amersfoort (113), has a...

"broad and diffuse meaning and an emotional appeal. Louis Wirth has described a minority as a group of people who, because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from the others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment, and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination" (114).

This definition has been widely criticized for its reliance on the feelings of a minority group in order to explain its existence. Furthermore, discrimination need not necessarily be such a strong defining characteristic of a minority. The situation of whites in South Africa provides an adequate example.

Hans von Amersfoort sets out to describe a minority according to a set of general characteristics. For him, minorities are..

"subordinate segments of complex state societies who may have special physical or cultural traits which are held in low esteem by the dominant segments of society. Minorities are self-conscious units bound together by special traits which their members share and by the special disabilities which they bring. Membership in a minority is transmitted by a rule of descent which is capable of affiliating succeeding generations even in the absence of readily apparent special cultural or physical traits" (115).

He also notes that minority peoples, by choice or necessity, tend to marry within the group as a means whereby identity may be preserved for future generations (116). Certainly Islam places guidelines and restrictions on the choice of marriage partner, and these have particular application and relevance for Muslims in minority situations. But it is perhaps questionable that minorities are today exclusively created 'by a rule of descent'. For example, there are now a number of converts to Islam who have joined the Islamic *ummah* in Britain and have become a part of this minority community. Few, if any of them, have a background or ancestry rooted in Islam. Like Wirth, Amersfoort again mentions 'subordination' as one defining characteristic of a minority. But it is perhaps too simplistic to assume that a minority's traits are held in 'low esteem'. His definition, like Wirth's, assumes that minorities are always in non-dominant situations. While this is often the case, exceptions have existed, such as in South Africa where the minority white community held power.

A strand that links many of the variables of a minority that have been discussed is the 'feeling of belonging' or *gemeinschaft*, that members of a minority group may feel, based on the sharing of common beliefs, values and norms. Having considered the qualities of a minority, Amersfoort goes on to suggest...

"a minority is a continuous collectivity within the population of a state. This continuity has two important aspects: a) the minority consists of several generations, and that b) membership of the minority has priority above other forms of social organisation" (117).

He also adds that minority status often means that cultural, ethnic, and religious minorities are often excluded from effective political

action. Similarly, they perhaps face unequal treatment in their interactions with the majority population in various public domains, such as housing, education, or in employment. These latter points illustrate the fact that societies often define minorities, based on a set of values, behaviours, and attitudes.

The above definitions have a number of limitations: some kind of ancestry and heritage for a member of a minority is assumed; the situation of dominant minorities renders many of the above definitions invalid; the flexible and changing character of minorities is not highlighted. If we consider Britain's Muslim community, it does however form a minority in many of the ways that are suggested in the above definitions. In the case of British Muslims, many of whom are from differing ethnic backgrounds to the majority of the population, racism and consequent treatment in many situations as of low status means that they are often regarded as a subordinate minority. But it is still a developing and changing minority community. Any idea of its being a static social collectivity must be abandoned in view of the innovations and re-structuring of identities that are taking place as a result of ideological diversity. The idea of Britain's Muslims as being a minority community must be offset against the fact of their membership of the *ummah*, which by virtue of its numbers, constitutes a *majority* religious community. For some Muslims in Britain, their identity will therefore be shaped by not only their current minority situation in the United Kingdom, but also by their membership of a much larger worldwide collectivity.

Britain's Muslims may be considered as a minority group by virtue of the fact that they consist of a community of about two million. Whilst being a large minority, this must be offset against the highly fragmented nature of the community. But simply as followers of Islam, they have consciously differentiated themselves from the wider community. This fact of differentiation on the basis of religion will be the defining characteristic of a minority for the purposes of this study. Despite holding to different cultural backgrounds, with all that this implies, practicing Muslims hold to different values, norms, and beliefs compared to the majority of the population. Membership of this minority is part of the landscape of reality that many will

have construed for themselves, and thus forming part of their identity. The values and practices of the minority will often be such that they must be kept by and large within the bounds of the minority community. Such boundaries may be strengthened as a result. Essentially, it is the unity that results from shared beliefs rather than the beliefs themselves that brings a group of people together.

Before leaving the discussion on the concept of a minority, it would be prudent to remember that in many ways, the whole of society is constructed by numerous overlapping minorities. Different aspects of a person's life - whether as a Muslim or otherwise - may make him or her part of a minority on various occasions. It is like a venn diagram where different parts of an individual's life intersect at different points with those of others. So while thinking of Muslims in Britain, some awareness of this overlapping of identities with others at various points should be recalled. It is inappropriate to simply think of a tight-knit community closed off from relations with the wider society, particularly in the case of the third generation.

2.5. Secularism and Secularization

In this section, an attempt will be made to outline the ideology known as 'secularism', and the concomitant process that often results from it - 'secularization'. Bryan Wilson, one of the leading figures in the secularization debate, distinguishes these two as follows...

"secularization relates essentially to a process of decline in religious activities, beliefs, ways of thinking, and institutions that occurs primarily in association with, or as an unconscious or unintended consequence of, other processes of social structural change. Secularism is an ideology; its proponents consciously denounce all forms of supernaturalism and the agencies devoted to it, advocating non-religious or antireligious principles as the basis for personal morality and social organisation. Secularism may contribute in some degree to processes of secularization..." (118).

The impact of secularism and secularization upon religious identity, particularly in relation to the British Muslim community, will be explored in greater detail in a later chapter. But for now,

consideration will simply be given to defining what the concepts mean; the effect that they have upon religion *per se*, especially in relation to Christianity and Islam; and their evolution in Britain. Given the close correspondence between these two terms, the following discussion will inevitably confirm their interconnection.

Though the concerns of this section will be examined from an Islamic perspective shortly, Syed Muhammad Al-Naquib Al-Attas makes an important observation that is worth noting at this stage. Regarding the connection between secularism as an ideology and secularization as a process, he writes...

"whereas the ideology that is secularism, like the process that is secularization, also disenchant nature and desacralizes politics, it never quite deconsecrates values since it sets up its own system of values intending it to be regarded as absolute and final, unlike secularization which relativises *all* values and produces the openness and freedom necessary for human action and for history" (119).

Here he touches an important point in suggesting that secularization may also be considered as part of the *evolutionary* development of humankind...from, for example, living primarily in small primitive groups to complex urban settlements (120). Such a conception widens the scope of the term 'secularization' beyond the commonly understood meaning of it where is simply relates to religious change.

From the meaning of the original Latin word for secular - 'a thing belonging to its own time' - current understanding has developed considerably. Closer to present ideas of what secularism means, one of the earliest definitions was offered in 1906 by George Jacob Holyoake, sent to prison for six months for blasphemy. He suggests it is..."the doctrine that morality should be based on regard to the well-being of mankind in the present life, to the exclusion of all considerations drawn from belief in God or a future state" (121).

But long before Holyoake's definition, the term 'secularization' was used in the 17th century at the time of the Peace of Westphalia. It denoted the re-allocation of land from religious/ecclesiastical control, to lay/political authority (122).

Compared to the 17th century, the term secularization, is now used in a much wider sense. This perhaps reflects the widening scope of definitions of religion, upon which an understanding of secularization will largely depend. There has been a move away from the narrowness outlined by Henry Fielding in *Tom Jones*: "when I mention religion I mean the Christian religion, not only the Christian religion, but the Protestant religion; and not only the Protestant religion, but the Church of England". (123) Bryan Wilson suggests...

"sociologists have used this word (secularization) to indicate a variety of processes in which control of social space, time, facilities, resources, and personnel was lost by religious authorities, and in which empirical procedures and worldly goals and purposes displaced ritual and symbolic patterns of action directed towards otherworldly, or supernatural, ends" (124).

Over the course of history less and less of human life, particularly in the West, is directed towards, or bears reference to, the sacred.

But while some modern societies may be described as secular, this is not to be taken as indicating a past 'golden age' of religion. In most historical periods, there have been individuals who do not subscribe to a religious outlook, and who are concerned with "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life," in the words of the New Testament (125). Furthermore, during religious campaigns, secular interests may underpin the motives of those involved.

To many it now appears that the largely secular spirit of the modern world is perhaps unlike anything of previous ages. Two basic reasons may be cited: one is the 'global village' situation in which we now live; the second is that somehow the world has 'come of age' due to scientific and technological progress. These two factors are perhaps the most significant in explaining the advent of secularization. Humankind now has greater power over the world and its resources. This has brought a new prosperity to many living in the industrialized nations. Increasing this power is the goal of the secular ethic, leaving little room for religious or spiritual considerations. The resulting situation for many of those now living in the world's largest cities is that...

"urban man has grown increasingly independent of the elemental forces of nature. The fruits of nature have become the raw materials of manufacturing. Apart from the sky, some decorative gardens and some natural food, everything around the city dweller is man-made. Even his children have been planned. Men, women and children are now more valued *for themselves*. Increasingly the individual is courted as an elector by politicians; he is caressed by doctors, dentists, oculists and psychiatrist; he is pampered by merchants whose sole hope of fortune lies in attractively feeding, clothing transporting and amusing the customer with money in his pocket" (126).

In view of this ethos, the reliance of humankind upon religion or supernatural ideas has declined. Help and resources in life need no longer be appealed for from the gods. Even our finitude may be delayed through modern medicines.

With the advent of mass communications, there is an awareness of the unity and oneness of the world. New ideas, philosophies, and religious outlooks, can be shared by individuals living on the other side of the world to oneself. This increasing awareness of other races, cultures and belief systems has largely come about through secular progress and development. As a consequence, religious organizations have become aware not only of their mutual existence, but also of the power of the forces which have led to this awareness.

The reasons for secularization are many and complex. Essentially, the development of science, empirical study, experimentation, and a perceived need for ordered conceptions, led to a new outlook on life and the universe in the 19th and early 20th centuries. In the early part of this century, Max Weber spoke of the rationalizing process taking place in society and the 'disenchantment of the world' (127). Less recourse to the supernatural was leading to a decreasing orbit of religious perspectives. Supernatural explanations began to lose their relevance, and at the same time, humankind seemed more independent from the provision and plights of the natural world. "Skepticism became steadily institutionalized in science, providing an implicit challenge to untested and untestable hypotheses" (128). The sense of 'absolute dependence' on God to which Schleiermacher (129) had referred in the late 18th century, no longer seemed so credible.

With this ethos, the ideology of secularism began to take a grip. To the scientists and rationalists of the 19th century, reference to the supernatural no longer seemed a plausible basis for human action. "Pure reason leads men to agnosticism, determinism and the amorality of nature...(and) the triumph of political liberalism, scientific discoveries and the growth of industrialization tended to engender secularization, materialism and free thought" (130).

With the development of industrialization in the 19th century, more and more people moved to urban areas seeking their livelihood in factories. This move away from the countryside, and lifestyles close to nature meant that for the city dwellers...

"the possible intervention of the supernatural into everyday life became less plausible....new ways of thinking evolved as man came to inhabit an environment that was progressively more and more a product of his own making. Whereas in earlier epochs the past had dominated the present - a past sacralized by the supposedly timeless truths of religion - modern society was future-orientated, and that future was mundane and material..." (131).

Pragmatic thought has underpinned the secularism of the last two centuries: only concepts and actions that 'work' are considered expedient. In the twentieth century, American pragmatist John Dewey advocated a repudiation of monism, absolutes and ultimates...."there is no unity in the universe, and there is no panacea efficacious for all persons. The validity of every idea depends upon its instrumentality" (132). This ethos remains significant for the various humanist, atheistic and rationalist organizations that exist, and indeed thrive, in British cultural life today.

One of the striking, if paradoxical proofs of secularization, is the *growth* in the ecumenical movement, particularly in Christianity. A joining of forces by mainstream churches is one response against the combative strength of secularism. Similarly, the growth and vitality of new religious movements such as the Hare Krishnas, (particularly over the past thirty years in the United Kingdom) further indicates evidence of a wider process of secularization. Sects have held onto a

religious worldview with success in many cases, through cutting members off from the secularizing influence of the world.

Evidence for secularization may also be seen in the apparently secular nature of religion itself in some instances. For example, the use of secular-style music is used in some churches to attract new members to the congregation. In his book on the religious sociology of America in the late 1950's, Will Herberg noted that the qualities of 'authentic' religion, such as emphasis on the supernatural, deep inner convictions, and a refusal to compromise one's beliefs with those of the wider society, are not to be generally found in American church life, despite high levels of attendance (133). He found that in the major denominations, there had been a move away from thinking about 'other world' concerns. Instead, the shift was on 'this world'. Churches had come to resemble the secular society in which they were set. He explains the high church-going levels as due to the need for Americans to identify with a social group and feel a sense of belonging. Religion had become subordinated to the 'American way of life' which embraces values such as freedom of opportunity, democracy, and free enterprise. The main denominational churches in America all supported this 'way of life'. Little emphasis was placed upon doctrine and theology, but rather upon living a 'good life' based on the central values of society instead of the word of God.

In relation to the Christian churches in Britain, David Perman's book *Change and the Churches* (134) criticizes the secular antics of some clergy in order to appear relevant. Coffee bars, guitar groups, and lively 'showbiz' style preaching indicate that the inner life of churches has not remained immune from secular forces. But above all, the sheer number of people actually attending services shows that regardless of worship-style, there has been a significant drift of people away from religious institutions. While it has been argued that this in itself is no indication of secularization, it is nonetheless significant since the religious ideas which underpin institutions have also been weakened. In many cases, the large majority of people have simply stopped believing in traditional Christian doctrines, such as those concerning Creation, Biblical infallibility, hell, judgement, the Trinity, and salvation. Such beliefs, if held, may be so in a very

different way compared to the Christians of the early 1800's, before the advent of Biblical criticism. There has been a significant process of secularization taking place on the level of belief, even within the Church hierarchy.

"Church leaders become less certain about the nature of the supernatural, less committed to dogma or the formal creeds to which on induction they subscribe, and increasingly devote themselves to good works, general moral exhortation, community activities within their congregations, fund raising for their churches, and occasional commentary on political issues". (135)

Christianity has become more marginal to the lives not only of individuals, but also to the workings of society. Where religion once had a more pervasive influence on the whole way of life of a nation, now it is relegated towards fulfillment of the private needs of individuals. But even at the personal level...

"there is less allusion to God's will as the guide for attitudes, comportment, and action, and resort to prayers or curses is less frequent. Religious symbols lose their vibrancy and meaning, and charms, rosaries, and crosses become largely decorative items...Everyday life is negotiated by pragmatic attitudes and cause-and-effect thinking" (136).

Christianity in Britain has lost its ability to incorporate and give meaning and significance to many facets of social life. While the Church may still be important for conferring *rites de passage*, the number of individuals who enter into these rituals is declining (137), and often, the sanctity of these occasions has diminished. Where the Church was once important for the establishment, funding, and administration of schools, hospitals, and other welfare agencies, these are now largely in the hands of secular organizations. Though many of our social values may have stemmed from religious origins, it appears that today their connection with religion has been severed.

While considering the notion of secularization, it is clear that there are a number of evidential facets to it. Larry Shiner offers a clear summary of a number of 'types' of secularization. These are..."decline of religion, conformity with this world, disengagement of

society from religion (differentiation), transposition of religious beliefs and institutions, desacralization of the world, and a general concept of social change (from 'sacred' to 'secular' society) (138).

Sociologist Talcott Parsons, argues that the move away from ecclesiastical input into social institutions does not stand as proof that secularization has taken place (139). While he agrees that the church has lost many of its former functions, this has occurred, he suggests, through a process of structural differentiation. In other words, various parts of the social system have become more specialized, and as a consequence, perform fewer functions, including the church. It therefore does not mean, according to Parsons, that religion has become less important. It simply occupies a different place in human life, and religious beliefs continue to give meaning to life.

But while Christianity, and indeed religion in general has been relegated to the private sphere of life, religious experience still occurs. The research embodied in David Hay's *Exploring Inner Space* (140) indicates that people, on a wider basis than originally thought, continue to feel the presence of some power greater than themselves which is spiritual in nature. Sometimes profound experiences affect an individual's entire life, while for others, such events or awarenesses have little lasting impact. Either way, they prove that private spirituality remains a significant part of human life though it is set in an essentially secular public life where formal religious practice and belief has declined. It is now rare that individual religious values and experiences are a reflection of local community values.

Despite Hay's findings, there is still a sense in which modern life has 'desacralized' human existence, especially in the West. It is perhaps only the minority of individuals who now experience a sense of the mystery of life. With the general process of secularization at the macrolevel - i.e. in wider society - there has also been a secularization at the microlevel, within individual human consciousness. To many people, supernatural forces are no longer seen as controlling the world. Despite this however, humankind still

search for meaning and satisfaction in life, whether from material goods, leisure, or relationships.

As Christianity has not remained immune from the impact of secularism and secularization, nor too has the Muslim community in Britain. This is particularly apparent among the younger generations. It is almost inevitable that during the course of their upbringing and education in this country, they are influenced by the largely secular worldview of the wider society. More detailed attention will be given to some of the trends which indicate this impact, and especially its effect on religious identity, in a later chapter. For now however, recognition must be simply given to the pervasive force that the 'secular' society is having on the Muslim community.

Muslims themselves are perhaps the first to recognise this force. Authors such as Shabbir Akhtar (141), Syed Muhammad al-Naquib al-Attas (142), and Mohammad Siddique (143) have all addressed this issue. Others have also considered the impact of secularism on the Muslim community; some have attempted to give a clear academic outline of the issues; others have stated their ideas with a view to missionary activity. Common to many attempts to understand secularism with Islam in mind, is an examination of the impact of it upon Christianity in the Western world. Many cast their eyes back to the developments of the 18th and 19th centuries (i.e. industrialization, rationalism), and the largely 'secular Christianity' that has emerged. Many authors suggest that there is something Muslims can learn from the experiences of Christianity in the West, particularly as a warning.

In the early pages of Akhtar's book, he notes the threat faced by Islam from 'secularity', even in traditional 'Muslim' countries. He outlines the origins of secularism in the West, echoing many of the points raised above. But coming from an Islamic perspective he notes the importance of recognizing that...

"the very category of the transcendent is being rejected as illusory. The challenge of secular modernity, then, cannot be merely a local challenge to the Christian faith. It is not some isolated heresy invented by Western

intellectuals seeking to tear themselves away from their traditional Christian roots; it is rather a challenge to monotheistic conviction as a whole, indeed to all transcendent religion. The suggestion that Muslims should see the dealings of western Christianity with secularity as a paradigm will appear anathema to the orthodox Muslim mentality" (144).

He argues that Muslims can no longer afford to batten down the hatches against secularity, pretending to be immune from its forces. Akhtar suggests that the Islam of the future must be able to take account not only of its past, but also of the realities of the present world, marked by rationality and criticism. New agendas and new lines of thought are the tools needed for the task.

Al-Attas's *Islam and Secularism* relies upon a definition of secularization as the liberation of humans...

"first from religious and then from metaphysical control over his reason and his language. It is the loosing of the world from religious and quasi-religious understandings of itself, the dispelling of all closed world views, the breaking of all supernatural myths and sacred symbols" (145).

Al-Attas also refers to Harvey Cox's *The Secular City*, citing his reference to secularization as "the disappearance of religious determination of the symbols of cultural integration" (146). Besides these references, he does not offer any particularly 'Islamic' definition. This reflects the idea in Islam of the unity of human life, without division between the sacred and the secular/mundane/worldly. According to Islamic theology, there is no orbit of life that is excluded by religion. The developments taking place in the 'Islamization' of knowledge process are a means to accommodate even the most modern technology and science into a religious framework. According to Al-Attas, Islam is the "religion which transcends the influences of human 'evolution' and historicity" (147). Its worldview and values are held to be absolute for all ages, and there can be no idea of these being 'secularized'. The nearest that Islam has for our notion of secular is a term found in the Qur'an... '*al-hayat al dunya*' meaning worldly life, or the life of the world (148).

"The word *dunya*, derived from *dana*, conveys the meaning of something which is *brought near to the sensible and intelligible experience and consciousness of man*. By virtue of the fact that what is brought near - the world - surrounds us, as it were, and overwhelms us, it is bound to distract us from consciousness of our final destination which is beyond it" (149).

The Qur'an does not speak disparagingly of the world, rather it encourages humans to avoid having their attention diverted away from the life to come (*al-akhirah*) in the Hereafter, through preoccupation with this world.

As was discussed earlier, *tawhid* is the underlying basis for Islamic belief and practice. But it is clear simply from observation of Muslims in the modern world today, that the sense of unity and coherence in human life has been lost in many cases. Even in so-called Muslim countries, practice of Islam may not be in reality an integral part of all social, economic or political life. The world of Islam has not remained untouched by Western influences. Where Islam may appear inadequate to deal with changing world circumstances, the fault lies according to Al-Attas, with Muslims and *their* inadequacy. De-islamization occurs through ignorance and forgetfulness, not through lack of relevance in Qur'anic principles and guidance.

Muslims, both in majority and minority situations, are facing the difficulties wrought by living between modernity and traditionalism. Andrew Rippin summarizes it thus..."we are dealing with a revealed, inherited world view in tension with and changing alongside an emerging, newly discovered world view" (150). 'Modern' implies an acceptance of the technological advances and ethos brought about by recent developments in science, medicine, and so on; 'traditional' suggests that areas of life continue to be dictated by the authority of the past, especially in those areas where other people have 'modernized'.

Where this past is questioned, it becomes a problematic dimension of life, and there is a sense in which there can be 'no turning back'. Muslims in all parts of the world have been affected by modernity to some extent, simply because of its worldwide impact. Few parts of

the world have remained untouched by industrialization, urbanization, science and technology, social mobility, growth of political parties, unions, youth awareness, and the emergence of secular/rational norms. Socially, politically, economically, and intellectually, the world is a different place compared to even fifty years ago. Muslims and the pillars of Islam are existing in a world characterized by Peter Berger's 'Five Pillars of Modernity'...

- "1) Abstraction (in the way life confronts bureaucracy and technology especially).
- 2) Futurity (the future as the primary orientation for activity and the imagination, and life governed by the clock).
- 3) Individuation (the separation of the individual from any sense of a collective entity, thus producing alienation).
- 4) Liberation (life viewed as dominated by choice and not fate; 'things could be other than what they have been').
- 5) Secularization (the massive threat to the plausibility of religious belief)" (151).

While 5) is the concern of the current section, 3) and 4) will be taken up in greater detail shortly. For now however, brief attention will simply be given to some of the ways in which the Muslim world has been affected by modernity in general. The effects of the West upon the *ummah* are as relevant for Muslims in majority as well as minority contexts; even the trends in these two environments of faith are influenced by each other.

Any traveller in parts of the Muslim world will be struck by the jarring juxtapositioning of the 'secular' against the religious. Stores with advertising for Coca-Cola emblazoned on their hoardings vie for attention with the *adhan* coming from the next-door mosque. There are signs of 'Western' consumer culture at nearly every street corner, and within the psyche of many living as Muslims in such environments, there exists some sense of 'identity crisis'. This is one of the major factors in the so-called 'revival' of Islam against Western values that is currently taking place in many parts of the world. This is an area of concern in its own right.

Even in so-called Islamic countries, the ideologies of socialism and nationalism have been taken up over against Islamically based

systems of government. Some argue that oil revenues have taken Muslims away from the principles of Islam, while the worldwide media is...

"the most obvious and blatant symbol of the invasion of the modern world and the most effective tool in its propagation. The loose morality, the instant gratification, life as centred on love and pleasure while oblivious to religious beliefs are all a part of the Hollywood image which is bringing the Islamic world into the global village" (152).

In the face of modernity, Clifford Geertz poignantly observes some of the responses. Each of these is to some extent visible in many parts of the Muslim world, from Bradford to Bahrain. Confronted by 'Western' ideologies people...

"lose their sensibility. Or they channel it into ideological fervour. Or they adopt an imported creed. Or they turn worriedly in upon themselves. Or they cling even more intensely to the faltering traditions. Or they split themselves in half, living spiritually in the past and physically in the present. Or they try to express their religiousness in secular activities. And a few simply fail to notice their world is moving or, noticing, just collapse" (153).

Some of these responses will be illustrated specifically in relation to the Muslim community in Britain in a later chapter. But for now, attention will turn away from secularism and secularization towards the ideology of liberalism...yet another strand in the ideological tapestry that makes up the environment in which young Muslims are a part.

2.6. Liberalism

During the era of the Renaissance and the Reformation, various cultural, social and economic developments brought to the surface ideas about freedom that had largely remained buried since the time of the early Greek philosophers. The essence of the modern liberal idea of freedom rests upon the "attribution of rights of the individual against those in authority over him....the right, within limits strictly or loosely defined, to order his life *as seems good to him*" (154 my italics). The idea of liberalism is closely connected with

that of individualism, and this concept will be considered shortly. "Some argue that liberalism is a theory of the minimal government, others argue that it is the theory of basic individual rights, and yet others, especially Dworkin and Rawls, define liberalism as an egalitarian philosophy" (155). It is clear that there are a number of different perspectives upon the term.

There is a strong case for linking the rise of the modern state and an awareness of religious plurality with developing ideas about individual freedom. To enter into detailed discussion on political philosophy is not relevant here, except to say that the advent of the modern state has ushered in a time of social and geographical mobility and upheaval. Many previously taken-for-granted social patterns disintegrated, leaving the individual with greater freedom to break for example, with the trade or location of his or her predecessors. "Custom-bound" (156) communities have lessened their hold on many people. It is now common for young adults to leave the parental home before marriage, often living more independent lives than those of their counterparts fifty years ago. Many major decisions taken by the individual during the course of life are largely self-determined, not the result of community or family obligation or tradition. Furthermore, many decisions that an individual may make during the course of life are not considered so binding as they might have been a century ago. Vows are broken almost as easily as they are made, whether in the realm of relationships or religion.

The affiliation between toleration and liberalism is close. Thinkers and philosophers - from Spinoza to Locke, and others - have asserted the rights of individuals to think and reason freely, unhampered by pressure from other views or opinions. They argued that liberty of conscience was better than forcing people to accept certain doctrines which, in the end, leads to hypocrisy and the corruption of society by "destroying the good faith on which it depends" (157). There was a realization that to be forced to believe in a particular matter was no belief at all, and in matters of religion, does not bring salvation. Of course, one can be impelled to say certain creeds, but this may not lead to a genuine acceptance of

their truths, though repetitive narration of credal statements may lead to a kind of self-indoctrination. Later, Rousseau (158) and Kant (159) spoke of the idea of moral freedom in such a way that "being free consists in more than just having desires and not being prevented from satisfying them, that it involves having a will, being able to make decisions" (160). Although not considered a liberal in the sense in which it is being discussed here, Hegel took up these ideas later in his *The Phenomenology of Mind* (1807) and *The Philosophy of Right* (1821), in which he explains in detail the social dimension of human life. Some of what he says relates closely to many of the ideas expressed by the social identity theorists mentioned earlier. For example, he suggests that people's social identity is determined by the group to which they belong. The ability to reason, make decisions, live as part of a community, is part and parcel of ethical/social life, and it is within this sphere that freedom is recognizable.

"Men, as Hegel sees them, are progressive as well as moral beings; they develop their capacities as they create their institutions; the 'subjective' and the 'objective', their beliefs, wants, and dispositions, on the one hand, and their custom and conventions, on the other, are but aspects of one whole, and change together. And yet 'tensions' or 'contradictions' arise inevitably between these two aspects of human life, and progress consists in their emergence and in the overcoming of them. This progress is a growth in reason, a deeper understanding by men of themselves and their world, and especially that part of the world which is the system of their own activities, the social world, the world of culture; a deeper understanding and a fuller control over what they understand. This growth in reason is also a growth in freedom; in the ability to form consistent and realistic purposes and to remove obstacles to them" (161).

With the spirit of liberalism and the break-up of tight-knit communities, comes a new sense of self-reliance on the part of the individual. Contributing to public life rests more on personal aspirations and aptitudes, and less on the group or 'tradition'.

What of the liberalism of today? Some of the key thinkers in the debate between communitarians and liberal individualists include John Rawls (162) and Michael Sandel (163). Sandel for example, describes a liberal moral/political vision as...

"like most liberal visions (giving) pride of place to justice, fairness, and individual rights. Its core thesis is this: a just society seeks not to promote any particular ends, but enables its citizens to pursue their own ends, consistent with a similar liberty for all; it therefore must *govern by principles that do not presuppose any particular conception of the good*" (164 my italics).

Sandel opposes the ideas put forward by Rawls, arguing that the self is not distinct from the norms and values of the community in which the individual is located. He notes the difficulties of constructing a collective identity in modern social life due to the fragmentation of community.

In his book *After Virtue*, Alisdair MacIntyre suggest that in the world today, there has been a loss of "comprehension, both theoretical and practical, of morality" (165). Allied to this, there are in our society no established ways of deciding between competing moral claims, hence the "slightly shrill tone of so much moral debate, (and) corresponding to the interminability of public argument there is at least the appearance of a disquieting private arbitrariness" (166). Part of the reason for this, argues MacIntyre, is the changing understandings behind such words as 'piety' or 'duty'. Where these terms were once meaningful and relevant, today there is confusion over such 'language of morality' (167). It is reasonable to suggest that in modern life, people may recourse to any number of competing ethical systems. For example, they may refer to a widely accepted 'if it doesn't hurt anyone' principle, or to any variation on this theme. Besides a generally accepted framework of behaviour which dictates what is tolerable or not for most people, there is otherwise no standard yardstick for weighing actions or opinions. Reference to God or religion is often an unlikely dimension in the debate. Behaviour is rarely governed on the basis of the Judeo-Christian-Islamic heritage and "the tradition of the virtues is at variance with central features of the modern economic order and more especially its individualism, its acquisitiveness, and its elevation of the values of the market to a central social place (168).

Various arguments have been used to challenge liberalism and the ideas of its adherents. One of the key criticisms is that in order to

preserve the liberals' absolute priority of values and principles of justice, they must also hold to ideas about the self and personal identity that appear untenable. Few liberals can go so far as to say that identity is partially determined by attachments and roles in a community. Furthermore, they are not prepared to relinquish hold on their view that individual rights must be preserved over and above the general good.

For those who think of themselves as liberals, there is a dilemma when it comes to the matter of ethnicity and minority groups. Particularly in the case of racial/ethnic coteries, the group is emphasized over and above, and indeed against that of the individual. Modern Western society forces the choice, in MacIntyre's words, between "'Nietzsche or Aristotle'...a politics of the will to power or one of communally defined virtue" (169). In a society wherein there reside groups with radically different religions, racial backgrounds, and general perspectives, liberalism and individualism are unlikely to serve the purposes of the group in achieving a *modus vivendi* between themselves and the 'majority' community.

Michael Sandel suggests that we "revitalize those civic republican possibilities implicit in our tradition but fading in our time" (170). He argues that settled roots and well-established traditional norms and values held by most of the members of a society are the only basis for social life in a pluralistic culture of a modern country, where minorities value different religious, linguistic, and cultural practices from the majority. Charges of over-optimism have been levelled at Sandel here (171). One need not look so far back in history to appreciate that beliefs and practices that have become too well-established by the majority have not made way for individual freedom and appreciation of pluralism.

The ideas of liberalism that emerged in the eighteenth century evolved from largely homogeneous societies. If the ideas of liberalism were tenable in this era, they are less so now. By the late twentieth century, Britain is one of numerous countries marked by ethnic and religious diversity. The migration of people to Britain from vastly different backgrounds from the majority of the population has thrown

the whole outlook of liberalism into difficulty. Where for the liberal issues of identity are based solely upon the individual, for many of the migrants to Britain over the past thirty years, their identity has been based upon a collective consciousness.

"In many pre-modern, traditional societies it is through his or her membership of a variety of social groups that the individual identifies himself or herself and is identified by others. I am brother, cousin, and grandson, member of this household, that village, this tribe. These are not characteristics that belong to human beings accidentally, to be stripped away in order to discover 'the real me'. They are part of my substance, defining partially at least and sometimes wholly my obligations and my duties. Individuals inherit a particular space within an interlocking set of social relationships; lacking that space, they are nobody, or at best a stranger or an outcast (172).

Coming as they were from largely traditional Asian countries, for those migrants to Britain, their identity was largely based upon a wider group identity. For the young generation living in a society where in general *the individual* is more prominent/significant than *the group*, there is a degree of tension between fulfilling *individual* aspirations within a community where the majority of members still define themselves on the basis of the collectivity. This is not to say that the younger generation have lost their connection with, for example, the *biraderi* (173), but these associational structures are changing their significance in the British context.

Tension also arises if one follows the liberal ideal when it comes to the aspirations of groups who wish to express themselves and demand recognition. Ideas of individual freedom and justice held so strongly by the liberal will for them be largely irrelevant. In view of their location in a new environment, succeeding generations of those of migrant origins are trying to assess how to have more autonomy as members of a wider collectivity. Reconciling the demands upon them has meant that many have cast off some of their original cultural traditions. Furthermore, many members of ethnic/religious minorities are still unable to fulfill the liberal ideal of personal freedom, not simply for identity or associational reasons, but for economic ones.

Liberals may assert that all can be absolutely free, but freedom and opportunity are closely linked to material/financial resources. The liberalism and personal freedom advocated by a wealthy university lecturer will appear meaningless to an unemployed Bangladeshi Muslim with a family to support living in London's Tower Hamlets, surrounded by others of a similar background and situation. It is the diversity of modern societies that has thus thrown up the conflicts inherent in the liberal position. And given the close connection between liberalism and individualism, the criticisms of one relate contiguously with the other.

The dilemma for the liberal in relation to Britain's Muslim community was superbly illustrated in the Channel Four film 'Northern Crescent' (1989). Set in a small Yorkshire town with a substantial Muslim community, the film attempted to re-capture some of the issues and tensions created by the Honeyford Affair, and later the publication of *The Satanic Verses*. Among the cast, one of the characters is a typical 'liberal'. She fervently supports the demands of the Muslim community on many different levels (socializing with them, campaigning with them, and empathizing when they were victims of racial attack) especially when it came to their requests for religious provisions in the school. After apparently unceasing support, she has to then break with the community when they use more violent tactics to protest against *The Satanic Verses*, and the ideas and behaviour of Ray Honeyford. She could no longer 'run with the hare and hunt with the hounds', and her liberalism ultimately prevented her from supporting her Muslim neighbours.

Matters of freedom and responsibility from an Islamic perspective have been taken up by a number of Muslim scholars. Hasan al-'Anani (174) has considered some of the issues involved with specific reference to the Qur'an. In many ways, his book is an attempt to highlight and remind those Muslims who have..."under the cultural onslaught of the West borrowed the western imperialistic concept of freedom with all its secular implications directly contradicting the teachings of Islam" (175).

On the one hand Islam gives its followers much freedom, yet on the other, the Qur'an often speaks of the responsibility that Muslims should have towards Allah, and the rest of humanity. While there is "no compulsion in religion" (Surah 2v256), there is also the injunction to care for family and neighbours, and to give to charity. Allah has given to the Muslim certain duties and obligations in order to fulfill his or her responsibilities as a 'trustee' (*khalifah*) of Allah on earth.

"All commentators believe that the word 'trust' whether taken narrowly to mean religious obligations or broadly to mean general responsibility as an agent or representative of Allah, implies human freedom. This is because the real answerability of an agent for his obligations and duties or the metaphorical responsibility of mankind for all general Islamic injunctions, cannot be conceived without someone who has the freedom to accept or reject" (176).

It is possible to sum up the Islamic position in the phrase 'freedom with responsibilities'.

Islam departs from the classical liberal position on a number of issues. While ideas of justice, freedom and rights are not in any way alien to Islam, in contrast to many liberals, the Qur'an outlines a framework for the constituents of human life. It presupposes what 'the good life' entails, conflicting therefore with Sandel's observation above. So, while individuals/Muslims are free to order life as they see appropriate, there is nevertheless a basic structure determining the bounds of all human relationships, both with God and other human beings.

For a Muslim, there will be an awareness that the human will...

"like the rest of the creation of Allah, is with all its characteristics, traits, and potentialities subject and subservient to the Divine Will. In fact, its subservience to the Will of Allah constitutes the very guarantee for its existence and workings as a free agent, for that is what its Creator Willed and decreed for it" (177).

While Islam holds to a certain liberalism of its own, it does not go so far as to suggest that every kind of behaviour is tolerable. It does not advocate serene acceptance of anything. Like Islam, in the words

of Ibrahim Hewitt speaking at the November 1993 BAFTA conference, "liberal secularism is not a *neutral* position" (178). While Islam holds to certain premises, so too liberalism is not, as many may assume, a "completely depoliticised, unbiased and humane position" (179).

The debate will go on well into the next century when it comes to how Western Muslims should live in a society that has nuances of liberalism inherent in its structure.

2.7. Individualism

As noted earlier, liberalism and individualism are closely intertwined. Taken to its extreme, liberalism produces a socially alienated individual. But the most ardent liberals are having to concede that strict individualism is unsatisfactory.

"Dworkin has taken the largest step towards accepting some aspects of the communitarian critique of individualism. He rejects the interpretation of community as a need in general, but concedes that it is a need in the sense that 'people need the community in order to identify with it and recognise that the value of their own lives is only a reflection of and is derivative from the value of the life of the community as a whole' (180).

It is from within a community that humans find substance for their lives and their beliefs. Societies flourish best when individuals, who rely on a collectivity for their identity, take interest in what is taking place in the environment, groups, institutions, and activities around them. Something is lost when this sense is marginalized by individualism. "The particularly modern self...in acquiring sovereignty in its own realm lost its traditional boundaries provided by a social identity and a view of human life as ordered to a given end" (181). As a consequence, it is hard to deny the difficulties of maintaining a sense of self-perception in the midst of modern life. Michael Sandel expresses it thus...

"In our public life, we are more entangled, but less attached than ever before. It is as though the unencumbered self presupposed by the liberal ethic had begun to come true - less liberated than disempowered, entangled in a network of obligations and involvements unassociated with any act of will, and yet unmediated by

those common identifications or expansive self-definitions that would make them tolerable. As the scale of social and political organisation has become more comprehensive, the terms of our collective identity have become more fragmented, and the forms of our political life have outrun the common purpose needed to sustain them" (182).

The very notion of 'individualism' has a wide variety of connotations, and expresses a range of theories, and attitudes. It was first used as a term in the Enlightenment as conservative French thinkers criticized *individualisme* as an appeal to private reason and interests. In his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, (1790), Burke poured derision on the individual's "private stock of reason" and he feared that "the commonwealth would crumble away (and) be disconnected into the dust and powder of individuality" (183).

The social upheavals of the 18th and 19th centuries brought about considerable geographical mobility. These processes occurred...

"with increasing intensity in order to accommodate the productive demands and distributive rewards of technological society, promoted individualism, and detached men from the stable communal contexts and the settled order of past generations in which religious predilections had themselves been rooted. Simultaneously, social organization became less dependent on the local community" (184).

A religious group of the mid-1820's known as the Saint-Simonians, viewed the philosophers of their time as defending individualism and thus reviving the egoism that typified the thought of Epicurus and the Stoics. From a political perspective, they saw the inevitable and long-term effect of individualism as "opposition to any attempt at organization from a centre of direction for the moral interests of mankind" (185).

Numerous other French thinkers debated the issues associated with individualism. Underpinning many of their ideas was a view that individualism was behind the roots of social dissolution.

"For some, individualism resides in dangerous ideas, for others it is social or economic anarchy, a lack of the requisite institutions and norms, for yet others it is the prevalence of self-interested attitudes among individuals.

(Some) have seen it as all that undermines a traditionalist, hierarchical order. (It has been) contrasted with "associationism", "philanthropy", and "altruism". Blanc also stressed its progressive aspect as a rejection of authority, and a "necessary transition" to a future age of fraternity. Liberals such as Tocqueville condemned it as inimical to liberty. (It would involve) the apathetic withdrawal of individuals from public life and their isolation from one another, with a consequent weakening of society and the growth of the unchecked political power of the state" (186).

Regardless of whether individualism is viewed with the Enlightenment, the Renaissance, the Industrial Revolution, or the rise of capitalism in mind, many have regarded it as disruptive to social life and order. It points to individuals who have up-rooted themselves from a community, who think entirely of their own welfare and interests, and are concerned to secure for themselves certain possessions and comforts. It is perhaps synonymous with selfishness, except that in modern usage, individualism has shades of meaning which are rather more positive. Today, someone who subscribes to a philosophy of individualism may be regarded as demonstrating 'individuality'. In modern times, this can denote a person who thinks singlemindedly and who is prepared to go 'against the grain' of convention when it comes to certain procedures, values, or lifestyles. In some senses, many people today wish to assert their individuality and personal preferences. Those around them may admire their unique capacity for invention and originality when it comes to dress-styles or ideas of life. In modern parlance therefore, 'individualism' does not have such negative connotations as it has been associated with in the past. Rather, it has become an ideology which supports self-development and self-expression. These have come to be regarded as positive attributes.

Where the French thinkers perhaps debated the pro's and con's of individualism in the 18th century, German philosophers took up the ideas associated with it in the early 20th century. Among them, it is possible to identify some of the more positive roots from which today's use of the word 'individualism' has its roots. Simmel wrote...

"the new individualism might be called qualitative, in contrast with the quantitative individualism of the eighteenth century. Or it might be labeled the

individualism of uniqueness (*Einzigkeit*) as against that of singleness (*Einzelheit*). As any rate, Romanticism perhaps was the broadest channel through which it reached the consciousness of the nineteenth century. Goethe had created its artistic, and Schleiermacher its metaphysical basis: Romanticism supplied its sentimental, experiential foundation" (187).

The synthesis of the French and German approaches to the idea of 'individualism' can be found in the work of Jacob Burckhardt's *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien* (1860) (188). Where individualism had once been associated with aggressive self-interest which distained authority and preferred a reclusive existence in a private world, later it came to mean the harmonious self-development of the individual with the interests of culture and wider humanity in mind.

It was in America that the more positive ideas of individualism and an appreciation of it first took hold. It particularly appealed in the light of New England Puritanism, Unitarianism, and the Evangelical movement. Individualism was seen as the way to create self-reliant and morally responsible people. In economic and business circles, the ideology of individualism was a convenient support to a worldview advocating "that spirit which guards, protects, and encourages competition...The American Spirit - the love of freedom, - of free industry,- free and unfettered opportunity" (189).

Meanwhile on the other side of the Atlantic, various British philosophers considered the implications of individualism in a rather more downcast spirit than their American counterparts. In particular, it was seen as underpinning the evils of capitalism. But the social commentator Samuel Smiles rescued individualism from wholly pessimistic connotations. His attitude might be summed up in the expression 'Best of British'. Smiles wrote..."energetic individualism ...constitutes the best practical education" (190).

Entwined in most of the writings on individualism, a number of salient features can be identified. First and foremost, it is possible to identify regard for the supremacy and ultimate value of the individual person as a key moral principle. This philosophy forms the bedrock for most ethical and social theories of recent times. It is the minority who depart from the common understanding, as for

example, in the ethos of racist/fascist groups. Concomitant with this key principle, a second central idea inherent in the ideology of individualism is that of personal self-development. Back in 1800 Schleiermacher explains how...

"it became clear to me that each man ought to represent humanity in himself in his own different way, by his own special blending of its elements, so that it should reveal itself in each special manner, and, in the fullness of space and time, should become everything that can emerge as something individual out of the depths of itself" (191).

A third and integral dimension of 'individualism' is a belief that each person has a right to self-autonomy and freedom to determine his or her own life direction. Here one envisages people who in the face of the norms and values of the time, critically and rationally considers their merits and failings before deciding whether to conform or not to their directives.

When it came to applying this third facet of individualism to the realm of religion, Luther has voiced perhaps one of the most ardent assertions. He suggests that..."each and all of us are priests because we all have the one faith, the one gospel, one and the same sacrament; why then should we not be entitled to taste or test, and to judge what is right or wrong in the faith?" (192). Much later than Luther, both Spinoza and Kant clearly expressed ideas demonstrating their belief in autonomy. Kant for example, asserted that the individual will must consider and implement its own universal laws and predilections, weighing these against the laws of society.

If the ideology of individualism can be dissected into a number of constituent elements, then a further dimension that can be identified is that of privacy. In our times, this element is perhaps the most forcibly protected of all the others that have been mentioned so far. By privacy, most would generally agree that it denotes an existence removed from the public forum, wherein the individual is free to do or say as he or she chooses. This appears to be a particularly modern/Western idea, since in many of the remaining traditional countries of the world, any concept of a private life separate from interference by others is largely an inconceivable anathema.

Benjamin Constant described this particular freedom of privacy as "the peaceful enjoyment of personal independence" (193). Constant's words, written in 1829, are almost prophetic perhaps of our modern lives in which for most people, the greater part of their enjoyment and pleasure is derived from their private life. "In general, the idea of privacy refers to a relation between the individual, on the one hand, and society or the state, on the other - a relation characteristically held by liberals to be desirable, either as an ultimate value, or (as with Mill) as a means to the realization of other values" (194).

A further component of individualism is the idea of the 'abstract individual'. By this, one refers to the recognition that groups and societies are arrangements that are the result of individual preferences and needs. So for example, values, institutions, rules and norms are simply collective responses for the fulfillment of individual objectives. Concomitant with this idea is a further characteristic of individualism, namely the notion of 'methodological individualism'. This is the term Steven Lukes utilizes to refer to the perspective mostly associated with the social sciences, that society cannot be understood unless the individual is the primary reference point. One of the principle modern exponents of this view is Sir Karl Popper. He wrote..."all social phenomena, and especially the functioning of all social institutions, should always be understood as resulting from the decisions, actions, attitudes, etc., of human individuals, and...we should never be satisfied by an explanation in terms of so-called 'collectives'..." (195).

Methodological individualism has met with both supporters and critics. Those social psychologists who understand society and inter-personal interaction with reference to certain individual psychological 'needs', 'drives', and 'instincts', are perhaps the most ardent followers of the methodology of research which gives primary attention to the individual before the group.

Religious individualism is related to the principle of autonomy discussed above. But it warrants further investigation in its own right. Essentially it refers to a idea that each person is responsible

for his or her own relationship with God, who or whatever they conceive the Ultimate/Absolute to be, free from the interference of mediators or priests. Underpinning this conception are two extremely important principles: "spiritual equality and religious self-scrutiny" (196). Various Christian movements embrace these ideas in one way or another. Max Weber sums it up thus: "In spite of the necessity of membership in the true Church for salvation, the Calvinist's intercourse with his God was carried on in deep spiritual isolation" (197).

An inherent part of the individualism so far discussed is the idea of the individual as being the final arbiter of his or her moral life. To each individual falls the duty to decide for his or herself the difference between right and wrong. Both Kant and Hume subscribed to this philosophy, though in different ways they avoided the final implications of it. Hume did this by proposing that individuals were in fact morally uniform in some way; Kant suggested the idea of an impersonal moral law which bound most people. The various shades of existential philosophy which deny "objective universal moral principles" (198) are expressions of ethical individualism.

Finally, epistemological individualism refers to the suggestion that when it comes to our knowledge of the world, each individual is the final reference point. Aside from the philosophy of solipsism, empiricists argue that "we know nothing beyond our own purely subjective experience, enclosed within the circle of the mind and the sensations it receives" (199). Critics of this standpoint stress the shared meanings of language and public life as evidence that certain types of knowledge are part of a collective consciousness to which all have access.

During the 1970's a Harris poll was conducted in Britain questioning people on their views as to why attendance at church had declined. By far the most common response was that there were now other diversions claiming one's attention. More specifically, television, bingo, and motor cars were cited as the principle distractions. Of these three, only one is a sociable activity in any way similar to church-going - bingo. The other two...

"threaten organized religion by disrupting traditional associational patterns altogether. These modern tendencies may be summarized by the words *mobility* and *privatization*" (200).

Television and the privately owned motor car contributed to "family autonomy in leisure and recreation reinforcing the modern trend towards the privatization of social life" (201).

This discussion of the ideology of individualism further 'sets the scene' of the underlying ideas and theories that have shaped society as we now know it. Various dimensions of the individualist ideology can be found in modern Western life. It is within this society that Muslims have made their home, and as such they enter into a certain point in the history of ideas. If Jung's theories regarding a 'collective consciousness' held by people in society, and transmitted from one generation to another are correct, then Muslim immigrants, bringing their own 'collective consciousness' (shaped by Islam), will almost certainly face a radically different 'consciousness' to which they are familiar. Now, in view of the 'individualism' of current Western society, the young generations of Muslims are wrestling with what it means to be an *individual within a group*. On the one hand many yearn for a sense of belonging to a community, yet on the other they wish to assert their own identities as individuals. How far does such a wish diverge from a Qur'anic outlook on life?

In many ways, Islam is a highly individualistic religion. It is the responsibility of each Muslim to make their commitment to Islam by observing the Five Pillars. All the duties prescribed by Islam are essentially to be performed by the individual.

"The Qur'an calls upon man to be and believe as a person free from any hereditary or environmental influences. Each individual must form his own opinion independently and believe in the truth. His decisions in this regard should not be affected by his parents and forefathers or by social habits and customs. Each man must decide for himself" (202).

When the *muezzin* announces the call to prayer (*adhan*) it is the duty of the individual to respond. During the prayer itself, even if

performed in community, it is the gestures and recitations of each person that are important. Kenneth Cragg writes, "though the response involves community, it is made by the individual" (203). But this individualism is tempered by the fact that since the early days of Islam, Muslims have directed their prayer towards a common point on the earth's surface, thus linking them as a community in solidarity to one history. Furthermore, the gestures of prostration express a certain surrender of the self, and an abandoning of individual ego.

The performance of pilgrimage to Mecca, a once-in-a-lifetime event for many, is also an individual undertaking. It is the responsibility for whoever is able, to visit the Holy Mosque and circumambulate the *Ka'bah* once in their lifetime. But typically, the realism of Islam recognises that there will be some people for whom the pilgrimage (*hajj*) will be impossible for various reasons. The *individual* responsibility then changes, and the role of the community becomes paramount.

"the pilgrimage in Islam involves and affects more persons than physically perform it. It becomes in a sense a vicarious experience. The village, the small mosque community, or the city quarter greets returning pilgrims with possessive pride. Their impact provides, so to speak, a participation by proxy" (204).

Incumbent upon all Muslims is the giving of alms, known as *zakat*. While it in one sense aimed at the welfare of the poorer members of *the community*, it is nonetheless, an individual, spiritual act. It is a means to cleanse the soul, and atone for one's sin. Many Muslims would regard giving as the only way to sanctify and purify their keeping. More than any other the other of the pillars of Islam, *zakat*, or additional charity (*sadaqat*) is something which the individual should do *privately*, though it is of course for the welfare of others. Where all the other facets of Islam have an inherently communal (as well as individual) dimension, *zakat*, is essentially a private matter between Allah and the believer. The privacy entailed in alms-giving for Muslims ensures that it is regulated by the right motives. Privacy in Islam should not become the opportunity for wrong-doing. Speaking about the Islamic state of Iran fifteen years

on from the revolution, John Simpson quotes one sceptic of the religious revival: "Under the Shah we used to drink in public and pray at home. Now we just reverse the process" (205). Even in Iran, the religious revival has not, it seems, invaded the private sphere.

The witness to the essential beliefs of Islam in the *Shahadah* (206), is primarily a personal testimony. The *Shahadah* embodies in its creed the foundations on which a Muslim builds his or her individual relationship with Allah. *Ramadan*, while being a communal event, is essentially an individual undertaking. It further reinforces the very meaning of Islam itself...peace through submission. *Ramadan* is a part of this 'letting-go', and the process of learning to submit. Furthermore, it is a reminder of the sufferings of the poor, and thus it should serve to increase the consciousness of Muslim's of this section of the community during the rest of the year. Where the individualist spirit of Islam appears most evident, is tempered by certain duties and responsibilities in relation to the community, family, and neighbours. Islam in general, supports the ethos of individualism when this is based on unselfishness, consciousness of God, and regard for others. Where Tocqueville feared that individualism led to 'weakening of society' and the isolation of individuals from one another, the individualist spirit of Islam checks this propensity through its strong social ethic. One of the key features of the ideology of individualism as stated earlier, was its central moral principle of the supreme value of the individual. This would be supported by Islam, given that each person is regarded as having an element of the Divine spirit of Allah within them (*ruh*).

One of the most striking ways that Islam supports the ideology of individualism is the absence of a clergy. In Islam, each person has the right to interpret doctrines in their own way, though there are specialists also assigned for the deliberate purpose of interpreting Islam in the light of its location in an ever-changing world. Fundamentally however, the quotation of Luther cited earlier is equally applicable in spirit to Islam, as well as Christianity. Religious autonomy is a key underpinning principle of Islam. Muhammad Qutb writes..."In Islam there are no churchmen...Religion is the common

property of all and every Moslem is entitled to benefit from it as much as his natural, spiritual and intellectual equipment may permit" (207).

Where the liberal ideology of the previous section may be interpreted for Muslims to mean 'liberalism with limits and responsibilities', the same may be said for individualism.

2.8. Materialism

In America it is possible to see a sticker on the back of car bumpers suggesting "I shop therefore I am". This appears to be one of the most indicative statements reflecting the materialism and consumerism with which the Western world is often associated. It highlights the acquisitiveness, self-protecting and preserving, us-and-them attitudes that underpin much social life today. "The vastly increased material wealth and productive capacity of the industrial society encouraged the growth of a modern hedonistic culture" (208). It is clear that individualism, liberalism and consumer materialism are all closely interconnected with the social processes that have taken place in the West over the past century.

In his book *To Have or To Be?*, Erich Fromm attempts to get behind some of the characteristics of modern materially-orientated society, particularly in the West. He is deeply critical of the assumptions that underlie rampant consumption...that material prosperity means happiness, brings satisfaction, or...

"that egotism, selfishness, and greed, as the system needs to generate them in order to function, lead to harmony and peace. We are a society of notoriously unhappy people: lonely, anxious, depressed, destructive, dependent - people who are glad when we have killed the time we are trying so hard to save" (209).

Fromm's central theoretical argument is that many people are in the 'having' mode of existence. In this mode, they define themselves by what they own or possess. The more one *has*, the more one *is*, as a person. This attitude underlies the greed and envy behind many motives and aspirations. Even leaders who are affected by the

selfishness of the system come to value their own personal triumph rather than their wider social obligations. Fromm writes, "in the having mode of existence my relationship to the world is one of possessing and owning, one in which I want to make everybody and everything, including myself, my property" (210). He identifies leisure as a major aspect of modern consumption, with relationships, travel and the media as the primary objects.

"To consume is one form of having. Consuming has ambiguous qualities: It relieves anxiety, because what one has cannot be taken away; but it also requires one to consume ever more, because previous consumption soon loses its satisfactory character. Modern consumers may identify themselves by the formula: *I am = what I have and what I consume*" (211).

In contrast to the 'having' mode, the 'being' mode is characterized by a wholly different relationship to the world. Instead of defining oneself through possessions and materialism, rather one's self-definition or identity is based on what one *is* as a person, minus consumer durables and things or people that can be 'possessed'.

In his book *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*, Sogyal Rinpoche outlines the result for many people, of trying to living in a materially-orientated society. "Modern society seems to me a celebration of all the things that lead away from the truth, make truth hard to live for, and discourage people from even believing that it exists" (212). For the spiritual seeker of truth, materialism stands as an obstacle to overcome.

The Qur'an appears to be ahead of its time in speaking of a time where greed for possessions would grip the hearts of humanity. Surah 104v1 reads, "The mutual rivalry for piling up (the good things of this world) diverts you (from more serious things". So while material goods are not themselves seen as inherently bad, it is the way in which they are viewed and stored that is condemned. The commentary by Yusuf Ali of Surah 2v188 which also speaks of materialism suggests...

"Besides the three primal physical needs of man, which are apt to make him greedy, there is a fourth greed in society, the greed of wealth and property. The purpose

of fasts (during Ramadan?) is not completed until this fourth greed is also restrained....more subtle forms of greed are mentioned...(for example) when we use our property or property under our control for vain or frivolous uses. Under the Islamic standard this is also greed" (213).

The dilemma for the Muslim living amid the materialism of the West is to retain an Islamic sense of perspective upon owning and material goods, and to preserve a sense of identity based on Islam rather than on possession of the consumer fads and fashions of the day; it is the courage to stand against the pressures to conform to a certain lifestyle centred around leisure and material goods.

2.9. Pluralism

The word pluralism often conjures up imprecise ideas. "It may equally well apply to an ordered dialogue of intersecting viewpoints and to an inharmonious melange of ill-assorted fragments" (214). This section will try to unpack some of the meanings associated with the word 'pluralism', both from the viewpoint of the secular inquirer and religious scholar. Most importantly it is necessary to understand 'pluralism' as a phenomenon, paving the way towards the discussion that will follow later on the effect that ideological diversity has on identity. But even at this stage it is important to keep in mind one of the key issues of this thesis, reflected in some way in the words of Hasan Askari. "The religious consciousness of a Christian, a Muslim or a Hindu is different within a multi-religious situation from his consciousness when he is in an over-all Christian, Muslim, or Hindu society" (215). An understanding of how a multiplicity of ideologies affects a minority religious community amid a majority secular society demands an examination of the notion 'pluralism'.

From within the discipline of Religious Studies, 'pluralism' is widely understood as referring a) to the sheer diversity of religions, and b) to the standpoint that each religion is equally valid as a partial reflection of a single Transcendent Reality. However the phenomenon of religious pluralism is viewed, there are many occasions where it is not highly regarded. As Chris Arthur notes, "we are too accustomed to seeing the close relationship between violence and differing

religions viewpoints" (216). But he proposes that pluralism in the religious sphere is "as important for the ecology of our spiritual landscapes as the maintenance of species diversity is for the biological environment" (217).

As an ideological and philosophical standpoint, religious pluralism is particularly associated with the ideas of the theologian John Hick. In numerous publications (218) he has outlined his Theology of Religions, setting forth his central proposal that each world religion is a culturally determined response to a single Ultimate 'Real'. However one approaches religious pluralism, it is now impossible in our 'global city' for any religious community to be unaware of the diversity of religions. For the non-missionary faiths, such as Sikhism, religious pluralism does not present a theological problem. Within Hinduism, diversity is often regarded positively, since it is thought to reflect the many faces of Divine Reality. However, for the missionary traditions, most notably those of Judaic origins, religious pluralism poses questions that seek theological resolution. Thinkers such as Hick have set about answering the challenges of diversity from within the Christian tradition. While his general theory can be applicable to most, if not all faiths, various Muslim theologians have specifically sought to reconcile the plurality of religions with the message of the Qur'an.

In recent times Muslims such as Hasan Askari in his *Spiritual Quest: An Inter-religious Dimension* (219), have attempted to engage in the debate on plurality from an Islamic standpoint. Askari's support of plurality is evident in the following quote...

"Religions are a blessing of God. By being many, they remain within the limits of Grace. God is One. Religions must be many. It is this necessity that is the hallmark of the religious consciousness in a multi-religious society. Plurality of religions is a guarantee that each religion will remain a religion" (220).

Islam itself gives scope for an acceptance of religious diversity through the Qur'an. Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians are regarded as the 'People of the Book'. They are communities who have a revealed sacred scripture, and Judaism and Christianity are an

inherent part of the Abrahamic tradition that is essential to Islam. Many Muslims would also regard the other major world faiths as reflecting the passage in the Qur'an that talks of different religious personalities and teachers being sent to different nations during the world's history. The Holy Qur'an states in Surah 10v47, "To every people (was sent) a Messenger". In his commentary of this verse, Yusuf Ali notes that every nation, or people or generation had either a Message or Messenger: Allah revealed Himself to it in some way or another. Teachers such as the Buddha, predating Muhammad by about 1000 years, may thus be seen in this light. An existence amid religious diversity is nothing new for Islam. From its earliest inception, it was surrounded by different religious and cultural traditions, and plurality in one form or another has shaped its development over the course of time. For example, the settlement of Muslims in Spain from the eighth to the fifteenth century placed it firmly within an interfaith context, inspiring some of the most profound Islamic spiritual insights as a result. Thus the location of Muslims in Britain today is simply part of a long history of migration and settlement of Muslims in non-Arab or traditionally non-Islamic lands.

So much for pluralism in a religious context; at this point, the attention must turn towards other conceptions behind the word 'pluralism'. The two areas of human interaction with which the term is most commonly associated are politics and multicultural issues. The latter will be considered shortly. For the meantime, it is necessary briefly discuss secular, political usage of the concept. An indication of what pluralism means in political parlance is cited by J.S. Furnivall. Speaking of different ethnic and racial coteries, he suggest that they...

"mix but do not combine. Each group holds by its own religion, its own culture and language, its own ideas and ways. As individuals they meet, but only in the market place, in buying and selling. There is a plural society with different sections of the community living side by side, but separately, within the same political unit" (221).

The differences between groups in terms of phenotypical characteristics, cultural lifestyles, religion, language, or class, all

constitute boundary markers setting them off from other groups in society. These boundary criteria are flexible according to the circumstances of the day and the development of the community over time. Such things as intermarriage, and the development of new attitudes within second and third generations mean that rigid boundary markers are impossible to sustain. Furthermore, the idea within the above quotation, that individuals from different communities only meet in the market place must be reviewed, certainly in the light of the British context. Rather than conceiving of groups wholly set apart from each other, it is perhaps more realistic to consider instead certain 'nuclei' within communities where contact with others is minimal except in the market place context. This can be compared to those who stand on the outside of the community, interacting freely with individuals on the outside of other coteries.

Unless specified otherwise, in this thesis the word 'pluralism' is used in the widest sense to refer to diversity in all its multivarious forms, whether religious, cultural, racial/ethnic, or ideological.

2.10. Multiculturalism

There are two ways in which cultural plurality, sometimes known as 'multiculturalism', has become a facet of life in the West over the past century. Firstly, through migration, various towns and cities in Western societies have started to reflect, in microcosm, the human diversity of the world in terms of races and cultures. In Britain there exist various ethnic/racial groups from all over the globe, many in different ways holding on to various parts of their original cultures. At another level, policy makers have used the term 'multiculturalism' to denote a certain social-political philosophy towards different cultural groups, especially in the areas of education and social services provision.

Policy makers often suggest that multiculturalism enhances society. The contribution of various ethnic groups of different cultural backgrounds to the local community is seen by many as enriching. But the survival of these various cultural groups, often as minorities,

depends upon a corresponding pluralism at the institutional level. Only with supporting institutions can ethnic and cultural minorities resist assimilation, and fully take advantage of the opportunities in the wider society. Brian Bullivant stresses this point. "Cultural pluralism without the corollary of structural pluralism dooms an ethnic group to inevitable assimilation in the long run" (222). In other words, there must be the scope for institutions and groups to be set up, maintained and controlled by different groups within society.

Definitions of culture have varied considerably from the cybernetic, to the ideational. While some emphasise the scope of cultures in mapping social spaces and functions in order for humans to live as groups, others see it rather as the organisation of conventions for understanding life and one's place within it. Many regard culture as an evolving phenomenon. Bullivant offers the following definition of culture...

"as an interdependent and patterned system of valued traditional and current public knowledge and conceptions, embodied in behaviours and artefacts, and transmitted to present and new members, both symbolically and non-symbolically, which a society has evolved historically and progressively modifies and augments, to give meaning and to cope with its definitions of present and future existential problems" (223).

Cultures are an inherent part of social structures. In a culturally plural society underpinned by structural plurality, members have the scope to move freely between different institutions, statuses, and roles according to the different dimensions of their lives. In practice, the philosophy and application of a multicultural approach is dogged, simply by the confusion that surrounds the term. John Rex writes...

"In Britain today there are many who believe that anti-racism and the goal of equality requires that all minority culture should enjoy equal respect. The unfortunate thing, however, is that because of the fuzziness of the ideal of multiculturalism, they gain apparent support from many whose aim, far from being equality, is precisely that minorities should receive something different and inferior" (224).

Inherently related to the concepts of pluralism and multiculturalism is that of racism. To this term the focus now moves.

2.11. Racism

Before consideration can be given to the phenomenon of racism, there is a need to elucidate what is meant by 'race' and 'ethnicity'. Both terms are subject to considerable disagreement as to meaning, and both are used inaccurately in many instances. By 'race' Bullivant uses it to refer to "visible phenotypical differences between groups of people in skin colour, eye shape, hair texture and other physical differences" (225). Definitions of the word 'ethnic' or 'ethnicity' are often very broad, referring to "every distinguishing characteristic from social class or status to cultural traditions to 'racial' features" (226). Common to many descriptions of ethnic groups are references to such things as shared history and ancestral origins, nationhood, collective memories of the past, shared religious belief, kinship patterns, language, and so on.

"The racial and ethnic features found in pluralist societies are used as boundary markers by individuals and groups to distinguish themselves from other individuals and groups for the main purpose of maximizing individual or collective advantage" (227).

Given the tensions that surround the notion of 'racism', combined with its being so stretched and over-worked as a term, in many social scientific circles, 'racism' has been substituted for the word 'prejudice' (228). The effect that 'prejudice' might have on identity will be discussed in a following chapter. At this stage it is sufficient to try to understand something of the meaning of race and racism; the relationship between racial and religious identity; the workings of the Race Relations industry; and the 'race' dimension according to Islam.

"Intolerance flourishes most where forms of life are dislocated, roots unsettled, traditions undone" (229). The truth of this statement lies in the fact that the presence of new and different racial and ethnic groups in a society often has a disrupting effect on the indigenous community, simply by challenging many assumptions and traditions on

the part of the majority. When the status quo is challenged and disturbed by the influx a large numbers of people of often very different backgrounds and cultures, racism may result. The identity of the community already settled in an area may be put under pressure.

"Many people see racial discrimination and racist ideologies as the result of blind and irrational prejudice against 'outsider' groups by individuals of intolerant or bigoted disposition, or, less severely, by groups who cannot cope with the 'strange' cultural characteristics of different racial groups" (230).

The majority of Muslims in Britain are of different skin colour to the majority of the population. There are those from the Indian sub-continent, Africa, and the Middle East, and each group has different phenotypical characteristics. By virtue of their differing 'colour', Muslims are often the targets of racially motivated attacks. A recent Home Office report suggested that "130,000 racist incidents take place each year - more than 16 times the 7,800 recorded by the police. The most common crimes were assaults, threats and vandalism...(and) racial abuse at work" (231). While individual reports of racism may not be recorded, the *issue* itself is being widely debated at present.

Racism exists not only between Whites and members of Asian/Black communities. It is also prevalent within different ethnic groups; for example, the outburst of tension between Indians and Pakistanis in Blackburn in 1992. Whether such incidents fall into the category of 'racism' is debatable, but ethnic prejudice was a factor in this particular example. One Indian was quoted as saying, "Pakistanis are lazy, they are untrustworthy. The Pakistanis harass our women, they steal or vandalize cars, they get drunk and go with prostitutes - they are the scum of the earth, everyone knows that" (232).

By and large however, racism that is directly due to colour difference is a serious problem facing the Muslim community. The Bangladeshi's of East London were shocked by the violent attack on Quaddas Ali in Stepney last September (1993). His case was widely reported, not just because of its particularly 'news worthy' status, but also because it was horrific enough to bring the issue of racism

to the front of people's minds. A friend of Quaddas who was with him at the time of the attack said, "they just attacked us for no reason other than we are black" (233). In most cases of racist assault, colour difference is the key target, not the religious identity of the victim. However, in a new and ground-breaking report by Tariq Modood entitled *Racial Equality: Colour, Culture and Justice* (234), he offers an important new perspective on racial and cultural prejudice.

In social policy terms, the key argument in Modood's paper is that racial violence should become a criminal offence, along with incitement to religious hatred. Behind his ideas lie an important understanding of the breadth of racism. He argues that debate should go beyond colour racism to tackle the issue of 'cultural racism', affecting groups whose cultural practices fall outside the majority norm. Modood appears especially to have the Muslim community in mind. Reporting the publication of his paper, *The Independent* noted, "the Muslim community, which makes up half of the UK's non-White population, falls outside anti-discrimination laws which cover groups such as Sikhs and Jews, but its members suffer from cultural racism" (235). What does Modood say about this form of racism?

It is, he says...

"targeted at groups perceived to be assertively 'different' and not trying to 'fit in'. It is racism that uses cultural difference to marginalize or demand cultural assimilation from groups who also suffer colour-racism. Racial groups which have distinctive cultural identities or community life will suffer this additional dimension of discrimination and prejudice" (236).

Of those dimensions of cultural racism, Modood lists such things as dress, diet, requirement for certain days away from work to celebrate religious occasions, language, family structure, etc., as the key factors. Racism that targets such characteristics of a person is, he says, "not properly outlawed (the courts have deemed discrimination against Muslims to be lawful) and yet it is the racism that is no the increase, has the greater impact upon Asians, and is an important cause of the rising levels of racial violence in Britain and Europe" (237). Referring to the British National Party leaflets circulated in

London last year, Modood points out that where 'Pakis' are mentioned, Islam is *also* bound up with this group. He suggest that the abuse of Muslims is therefore not just about religious hatred, or just colour, but rather what he calls "cultural racism" (238). This perspective makes it clear that such racism cannot be tackled simply from a religious or colour angle. Instead, attempts to defeat this form of prejudice must take in the plural character of cultural racism.

The growth in this form of racism can be identified, suggests Modood, as a reaction against the demands that various groups are making for public 'space', recognition, and resources. Like the feminist or the gay rights campaigners, who no longer wish to be a merely tolerated group who are free to do as they like in private, members of ethnic minorities are demanding that they too receive a share of acknowledgement and representation. Many of the conflicts with which Muslims have been and are bound up today, such as the Honeyford affair, or the campaign for Islamic schools with Voluntary Aided status, are part of a new "ethnic assertiveness" (239). It is this profile, and the demands that go with it, that the likes of BNP members protest against amongst other things. At the same time, the political structures currently in place are inadequate to tackle the fallout, or even debate the issue.

A key point made by Modood which touches directly on this thesis is the inadequacy in his opinion of the secularist approach to multicultural ideologies. He suggests that the multiculturalists send out a contradictory message.

"Multiculturalism which states that public recognition of minority cultures is essential to equal citizenship, combined with a denial of an equivalent public recognition of religion, can only convey the message that religious identity has and ought to have less status than other forms of group identity" (240).

For groups that wish to make religious identity their key mobilizing and identifying characteristic, such as the younger generations of Muslims in particular, there is so far no way of achieving representation.

From the Muslim example, it is clear that religious and racial identity are not always clearly identifiable. Unlike Jews and Sikhs, Muslims are not considered to be a *racial* group in their own right, hence they fall outside the boundary of anti-discrimination legislation. Sikhs for example, have successfully used the law allowing them certain rights and protections. In the case of Muslims, no such legal provision is available. In some cases, they have tried to play the 'race' card by looking to the Commission For Racial Equality when victims of religious discrimination, but such attempts have often been unsuccessful. The recent case of the Muslim pharmacist sacked for performing *wudu* (ablution) behind the counter of a chemist shop is a clear example. He tried to fight the dismissal on the grounds of *racial* discrimination, but with no positive outcome. The reporting of this incident in the Muslim press lamented this result, citing the supposedly unfair treatment of Muslims *vis-a-vis* other religious groups. But in many ways, the protesters in the case of the Muslim pharmacist appeared to miss the point. The Commission for Racial Equality is clearly aimed at tackling *racial* issues. For the Jews and the Sikhs, (not to mention others such as the Rastafarians), racial/ethnic origins and roots are a significant part of the religious identity, hence their success in using the CRE. But Muslims are not a *racial* group, and the scope of the CRE does not extend to tackle *religious* injustice. At a time when we hear so often of Muslims actively demanding recognition as primarily a *religious* community, their campaigns to the CRE appear to be a regressive backward move. It sends out the wrong kind of message, and undermines the good work of those who want to proclaim, "I am a Muslim and I want to be positively recognised as such *more than anything else*". If the universality of Islam as a religion, and its claim to be relevant for all human beings regardless of their ethnic roots is to be preserved, Muslims need to reconsider where their true identity lies (241). Modood's paper suggests that the Muslim case serves as an indicator of racial equality policies, their success and failure. Either way, there must be some agreement on the grounds upon which Muslims can protect their rights. In February 1994, seventeen Asian (Muslim) workers were awarded compensation of £1000 each after disciplinary action taken against them for taking a day off work to celebrate Eid.

The matter was reported as a "test case for the Asian community" (242). Rather, it was a test case for the Muslims in Britain, though paradoxically the court heard that the men in question had been "racially discriminated against" (243). So far, the whole issue is confusing and uncertain.

With the increase in immigration to Britain in the 1960's and 1970's, there was also a growth in various laws to protect newcomers to Britain. A whole race relations industry grew up to campaign against the prejudice that Black and Asian immigrants faced. It was as a result of the Notting Hill race riots in 1958 that the first legislation was passed in the area of immigration and racism. The 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act attempted to *reduce* the number of immigrants as a way of limiting the social unrest and problems. Such policy was then linked with integrative measures in the form of the 1965 Race Relations Act. This Act sought to make it illegal to discriminate in public places...hotels, restaurants, and also to incite racial hatred through speech or written material. An Act passed three years later extended these provisions, and thus making racism illegal in the spheres of employment, housing, or in the provision of public goods and services. As a result of these moves, various bodies were established to serve the welfare needs of immigrants; simultaneously, the Acts intended to educate the British public as a whole on the matter of race relations.

The legislative initiatives of the 1960's met with critics, especially from those who saw the ineffectiveness of them. So during the 1970's other Acts were passed introducing measures to give greater impact to the earlier laws, particularly in the area of employment. The 1976 Race Relations Act was the outcome, and with it came the now well-known Commission for Racial Equality. The CRE was the body responsible for handling individual cases of discrimination (except employment complaints handled instead by industrial tribunals), fostering good race relations, reviewing the adequacy of legal provision, and promoting the principle of equality of opportunity. Measuring the success and effectiveness of such bodies is problematic; racism is still a problem in British society, and the

CRE handles only a small proportion of the total number of racist incidents.

Islam itself has much to say about the question of race, taking various Qur'anic verses as the starting point. Surah 2:213 reads, "And Mankind is naught but a single nation". Surah 49:13 goes on, "O Mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other not that ye may despise each other". Such strong assertion of the common humanity of people is also echoed by numerous Hadith of the Prophet. In many ways, his expression of the equality of humankind has been taken up by the successive generations of Muslims since. For example, the annual pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Makkah brings together countless tribes, nations, colours, and languages.

"Whether black or brown, yellow or white, rich or poor, young or old, every male that our eye beholds is dressed alike, wearing two white seamless sheets of simple material, thus eliminating completely all marks and signs of distinction of dress between the African and the American, the Asian, Australian and European...Here they come, brother unto brother, sister unto sister, bearing witness to the brotherhood of mankind, to the equality of all human beings before their Creator...The gathering together of a multitude of worshippers of all races on the plain of Arafat is perhaps the most spectacular expression, symbol and proof of unity and brotherhood of man" (244).

In Islam, the diversity of humankind in terms of colour, nation and language is part and parcel of creation. The Qur'an itself speaks not just to the Arabs of the 7th century, but to the whole of humanity for all times and places, according to an Islamic perspective. Another way in which this teaching is manifested in practice of Islam is during the congregational prayer (*salat*). Even during the time of the Prophet, noble Arab families had negro slaves as members of their households. At the time for prayer they all stood together, shoulder to shoulder, recognizing that God made no distinction between their different 'worldly' status. Another sign of Muslim belief in equality between people of different colours and nations is free and unrestricted inter-racial marriages. According to Muslim thought, Islam rids humankind from attachment to false barriers of race, wealth and status. The historian Arnold Toynbee writes of

this..."The extinction of race consciousness as between Muslims is one of the outstanding moral achievements of Islam, and in the contemporary world there is, as it happens, a crying need for the propagation of this Islamic virtue" (245).

How far removed from the Islamic ideal is the situation for many Muslim minorities in the world today who find themselves victims of racist hatred...

This chapter has attempted to explain some of the meanings behind the terminology used in the thesis. It has outlined in particular some of the ideological forces that are brought to bear upon identity in modern Western society. At this point, it is now possible to suggest in theory what the notion of religious identity means, especially in relation to British Muslims. The theoretical emphasis of this chapter provides the framework from which the thesis can proceed to examine identity in relation to particular situations in the Islamic world over the last seventy years.

Chapter Two - Notes

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- (7) *ibid.*, p120.
- (8) *ibid.*, p128.
- (9) *ibid.*, p25.
- (10) *ibid.*, p95.
- (11) Erik Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, op. cit., p23.
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- (16) *ibid.*, p157-8.
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- (24) See for example, Henri Tajfel, Social Identity and Intergroup Behaviour, *Social Science Information*, vol.13.2, 1974; and Dominic Abrams and Michael Hogg, *Social Identifications*, Routledge, 1988.

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CHAPTER THREE

Chapter Three: Contexts of Identity in Recent Islamic History

3.1. The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Impact of the Rise of Nationalism and Secularism in the Muslim World

In the light of the previous chapter, identity for a minority community becomes an important source of group strength. For the Muslim community that arrived in Britain after the Second World War, the preservation of identity has been an important preoccupation, often unconsciously. The nature of that identity is the subject of this chapter and to begin, the discussion is placed within the broader context of developments in the Muslim world since the demise of the Ottoman Caliphate, the subsequent rise of nationalism, and the pervasiveness of secularism throughout the Muslim world.

The fall of the Ottoman Empire was a watershed in Islamic history; its decline signalled a new era for Muslims the world over. To understand the significance of this event, brief consideration will be given to the importance of the Ottomans, thus allowing a deeper understanding of the implications that its passing had for the Muslim world.

The Ottoman Empire was the last of the great Islamic dynasties. From the fifteenth to the nineteenth century the Sultans were the guardians of the holy sites in Saudi Arabia; the Caliph (the successor to the Prophet Muhammad himself) was thus the ruler of the mainstream Muslim community. The heart of Ottoman territory was Istanbul (formerly known as Constantinople - until 1453) in Turkey, and the successive generations of Sultans lived in splendor in the Topkapi palace. In the minds of many, mention of the Ottoman Empire is almost synonymous with that of harem's.

"The harem is extravagance, vulgarity, luxury - it is Orientalism, the stuff of European fantasy; it is not Islam. So much wealth, so much suffering, so much injustice are far from the ideas of marriage and married life in Islam. The verses from the Qur'an that are so prominent on the walls do not condone the spirit of the place" (1).

The high point of the Ottoman Empire was during the reign of Sulayman the Magnificent in the sixteenth century. During this era, there was large scale expansion; geographically and culturally. The intellectual and creative vigour of the Ottomans began to wane with the second unsuccessful attempt to capture Vienna in 1683. From this point on, the Ottomans lost their supremacy; and it was significant that this coincided with the growing economic and industrial progress going on in Europe. With the passage of time, the Ottoman Empire lost its hold on land. Various pieces of territory fell victim to victorious local nationalism and European colonialism.

Under the Ottoman Caliphate there existed a system whereby each ethnic community, religious or otherwise, had responsibility for its own affairs. The *millet* system - as it was called - enabled "tolerated minorities within an Islamic state to exercise their own jurisdiction" (2). In many ways, the existence and *recognition* of different coteries promoted and enhanced their individual identities. However, this system may be regarded as having contributed to the demise of the Ottoman empire. In the wake of challenge from the West, Turkey was unable to unite its different religious and ethnic groups into a strong defensive force, with loss to not only the majority community, but also for the minorities within its borders. With hindsight, there is much that the latter experiences of the Ottoman empire can reveal about Islamic communities in Britain today. In Turkey there was a dilemma between the ideals of unity in Islam, set against the strong cultural identities and legal self-sufficiency of minority groups. Similarly, as Penelope Johnstone has pointed out in her paper *Millet or Minority - Muslims in Britain* (3), Muslims living in Europe as minorities today have the choice between regarding themselves as being a '*millet*' - "a separate entity with their own laws" or a minority who "integrate with British society while retaining their own cultural traditions" (4). Some of the more recent innovations emanating from some sections of the Muslim community in Britain would suggest a move towards the former tendency. The recently inaugurated 'Muslim Parliament of Great Britain' is one visible example. So although the era of the Ottomans may be long gone, they nevertheless left an ideological legacy in their wake regarding minority groups which can serve for later generations.

The un-Islamic character of the Topkapi Palace - the seat of Ottoman rule - became for the West a symbol of Islam; because of its decadence and debauchery, Europe quickly associated Islam with the behaviour of the Turkish Sultans, thus fuelling the still distorted impressions held in the West of Muslims...

"Little wonder that Turks like Kemal Ataturk, who were born late in the nineteenth century, were repelled by their own past. Seeing little but decay and corruption, they wished to reject the past in order to establish a more respectable identity" (5).

It was Ataturk himself who picked up the decaying pieces of the Ottoman empire and formed a government in the 1920's, orientating modern Turkey along Westernized lines. Many social and military institutions were modelled upon their European equivalents, and Turks looked back on their so-called Islamic past with some degree of "cultural embarrassment" (6). Ataturk attempted to remove religion from the orbit of his government and the national life of Turkey. One of his most significant moves was the abolition of the Caliphate which thus ended the Ottoman claim to represent the Muslim world. This sweeping move had resonances for Islam the world over. Muslims in India were particularly dismayed at Ataturk's actions, and they repeatedly called for the renewal of the Caliphate. Closer to home, Turks themselves, even today speak cautiously of their Islamic identity, fearful of earning themselves the nickname 'yobaz' meaning 'backward'. But simply by its location, Turkey is an important bridge between the Islamic world and the West and its position is now one of tension: "will Turkish society continue to imitate Europeans and eventually succeed in becoming European, or will it rediscover its own Islamic culture?" (7).

Resolving this tension largely comes down to the question of religious identity: its strength (or not) over and above national, secular identity. In many ways, Turkey is just one of many Islamic countries wrestling with this apparent tension between the identity conferred by Islamic heritage, alongside its place in the modern world. In many ways the revival of Islam is clearly visible in Turkey: more women are wearing hijab as a visible sign of their religious identity;

attendance at mosques has increased (8). The only surprise in this assertion of Muslim identity is that few Turks wish to see the shariah law enforced, and thus replace the secular state (9).

Turkey's religious identity crisis - brought about from the era marked by the fall of the Ottoman empire - has been played out (and is still being so) in a number of other Islamic countries. One way or another, the impact of the West in some form has often been the catalyst for the drama. Looking further East at the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent, European colonialism is part of an historical process, the consequences of which Muslims are still coming to terms with.

Although the British had had trading interests in India for many years through the East India Company, their influence extended through various wars until the most significant war - the Indian Mutiny in 1857. From this time onwards until 1947 (the birth of Pakistan), to be a Muslim was to go against the grain of British rule. An Islamic religious identity tarnished the jewel of the Imperial crown. Set against their relationships with the British and the Hindus of India, Muslims began to assert their identity. They only needed to look towards the figure of Jinnah - the Quaid-i-Azam of Pakistan - to find a man who could lead their campaign. In 1947 the Muslims of India found themselves with two separate lands, known as East Pakistan and West Pakistan. This arrangement continued until 1971, when those in the East could no longer tolerate their isolation and feelings of inferiority from the rest of Pakistan. These were factors which were eventually to cause the creation of a break away Muslim nation now known as Bangladesh.

The personality of Jinnah himself was an important factor in the minds of his Muslim followers. Changing his style of dress from Saville Row suits to *shalwar kameez* was a significant move in trying to establish a new identity for Pakistan; he created a national dress that remains of paramount importance for many Pakistanis, wherever they find themselves. It is a reminder of their identity and culture, and it expresses an attempt to assert their own short identificational history. For indeed this identity is still somewhat uncertain due to

the lingering memories that remain of the killing and brutality brought about by partition, and the continued bad relations with India concerning the state of Kashmir.

A particular form of nationalism seems to have emerged in many parts of the Muslim world, particularly in the post-1945 period. Akhbar Ahmed expresses this with Pakistan very much in mind...

"two intellectual traditions appear to be developing in Muslim societies: one working in English with an international network and standards in mind; the other local, temporary and with an immediate social and political aim. Both traditions appear to exist separately from one another, rarely feeding or interacting with each other. The former is limited, often on the defensive and in danger of dying. The latter thrives and flourishes. Indeed, its very life-blood is the younger generation of restive, enquiring, intensely patriotic Muslims. Their sense of identity is further reinforced by what they read in the vernacular journals. Indeed there is a perverse pride in rejecting English as a language of the West and a falling back on the local language as an assertion of identity" (10).

The post Second World War period has seen a new found independence, free from colonialism, for many Muslim nations. But the impact of the West still asserts itself in many forms, and numerous Islamic countries have not yet resolved the dilemma of establishing a secure religious identity in the wake of the secularism, materialism, and nationalism that has marked many of the newly independent nations. Expressions of religious fervour and re-awakening have been evident from Iran in the late 1970's to Cairo in more recent years.

Even in the case of Pakistan, the world's first nation established ostensibly on the grounds of Islam, there exists a conflict between the religious identity that was its supposed rationale, and the forces of secularism. Religious ideology was a powerful rallying point around which the founders of Pakistan could unite the people. Therefore, underlying Pakistan's creation rested undercurrents of conflict between secular interests and religious identity; this clash was a part of the inheritance of those who have remained within

Pakistan, and for those who migrated to Britain between 1950's and 1970's.

Within the democratic political structures, countries like Pakistan have shifted uncomfortably over the last twenty years or so between the Westernized patterns of government represented by the Bhutto dynasty, alongside the assertion of Islamic identity marked by the era of General Zia ul-Haq. In more recent times, the nominally Islamic Bhutto legacy, now in the hands of daughter Benazir, overshadows the efforts of those attempting to establish an authentic Muslim nation. It is from this backdrop of a complex political and historical past where religion has been an important dimension that many Muslims from the Indian subcontinent migrated to the West, largely between mid-1950's and the early 1970's.

Within the Muslim world, the demands and dilemmas of competing identities and loyalties have found numerous expressions. One such manifestation is the wish on the part of many to assert a religious identity of a transnational kind, making the idea of an international *ummah* the most important dimension of social life. Juxtaposed against this move there has been a corresponding reaction along almost opposite lines, characterized by staunch adherence to narrow national, linguistic, or ethnic identity over and above religion. In the foreword to *Nationalism and Internationalism in Liberalism, Marxism and Islam*, Zafar Ishaq Ansari writes of the expression of this in Saudi Arabia...

"...despite the very close relationship between Islam and Arabism in history, the movement known as Arab nationalism came into sharp conflict with almost all the socio-political ideals cherished by Islam merely as one of the numerous expressions of the genius of Arabism rather than as God's final message to all mankind" (11).

To those who wish to define themselves along principally religious lines, the nationalism of others is perceived as a dangerous threat that could undermine the unity not just of the *ummah*, but of the whole of humanity. Moreover, nationalism in Muslim lands has brought about an identity crisis based upon the conflicting demands and loyalties posed between a sense of belonging to the *ummah* and

the nation state. Bernard Lewis suggests that where the idols that once inhabited the *Ka'bah* might have long gone, Muslims should still exert *jihad* against idolatry in a different form...that of nations, races and states (12).

But the tide of secular nationalism has appeared to turn somewhat with the establishment of organizations which have asserted the trans-national ties which link Muslims throughout the world. The foundation of the now influential Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) in 1969 was one such expression of *ummah* identity and consciousness. In a statement at the end of the Islamic Summit Conference (which preceded and was the catalyst for the OIC) it was declared..."Muslim governments would consult with a view to promoting between themselves close co-operation and mutual assistance in the economic, scientific, cultural and spiritual fields, inspired by the immortal teachings of Islam" (13). Despite the workings of an institution such as the OIC, the identity crisis of the Muslim world is still not resolved.

There have been other ideological reactions within Islamic countries since the demise of colonialism besides nationalism, but they are often closely bound up with it. In particular, socialism has been perceived by some as a basis for a new society, providing an alternative to wholly Islamic models for social and political life. Socialism appeals to those who see within it the principles of justice and equality that are paramount values within Islam. From the opposite side of the spectrum, the past fifty years have seen a growth in materialism in the Muslim world. In particular, the oil-rich states in the Gulf have not escaped some of the obvious consequences of massive wealth, especially among those into whose hands the revenues fall directly. "Saudi Arabia is frequently pictured as the most corrupt and un-Islamic nation in the world, a land of wine-drinking multimillionaires who repress the less fortunate citizens of their own country and do nothing to enhance Islam" (14).

Whether such a picture is accurate or not, oil based wealth exerts its influence to some extent. Similarly, the Muslim world has been unable to prevent interaction with international media. The world of

advertising, love and pleasure orientated programmes, and the loose moral standards often portrayed, are permeating Islamic nations and drawing them into the global city which characterizes the modern world. Factors such as media influence add fuel to the already-stoked fires of those who wish to see a worldwide revival of a popularist Islam for the masses.

Muslims the world over are therefore wrestling with problems of identity, both within the Islamic world, and in relation to the non-Muslim nations. The tension comes down to a question of self-perceptions in relation to the modern world, and developments and identity within Islam itself. Thus the discussion of this thesis is just one examination of a particular context in which identity questions are being debated; it arises out of a worldwide phenomenon engaging Muslims of very different backgrounds in many varying situations.

3.2. Muslim Migration to Britain since 1900

"Migration", suggests Clifford Hill, has been "part of a chain of events since the dawn of mankind" (15). Such an observation is particularly true of the Islamic community - the *ummah*, whose history has been significantly shaped by migration, or *hijrah*. Upheavals of psycho-temporal conditions have been characteristic of Islam since the first *hijrah* of the Prophet from Makkah to Madinah in 622 C.E.; therefore the arrival of Muslims from the Indian sub-continent and East Africa to Britain over the last century is part of a wider pattern and process of migration.

Migration may be defined as a "permanent or semi-permanent change of residence" (16). It can be the result of movement from one country to another, or a movement within a particular country, and it involves an origin, a destination, and an influencing set of factors. There are usually a number of considerations which either attract or repel a migrant towards or away from a particular country or region. Of special relevance to the migration of Muslims to Britain is the phenomenon of 'chain migration'. When one migrant achieves success in a foreign country, other members of his family, both immediate and

extended, often come to join him; "examples of the successful pioneers are an incentive in themselves" (17).

There are two main types of migration: forced and voluntary. The former is demonstrated in history, for example, during the years of the slave trade, or the enforced deportation of convicts to Australia. Voluntary migration is characterized by two predominant factors - 'pull' and 'push' influences. A migrant may move so as to escape undesirable conditions, such as religious persecution, or he or she may be attracted by the prospect of better living conditions elsewhere. Muslim migration to Britain has been influenced by both 'push' and 'pull' tendencies.

There has been a Muslim presence in Britain since the late 19th century. During the Victorian period, British people prided themselves on their open-door policy towards immigrants. Britain was known as the "very cradle of liberty and tolerance" (18). This apparent tolerance, and the hopes of prosperity and employment, were the significant factors that led to a number of Muslims, and of course other ethnic-religious groups, coming to Britain and other Western European countries from many parts of the world. The late 1800's saw the arrival of Sylheti seamen from Bengal, and their subsequent settlement in seaports such as Liverpool and Cardiff (19). Many of them had been recruited as seafarers along the maritime routes of the Indian sub-continent, due to the expansion of the British empire. The opening of the Suez canal in 1869 was a further impetus for the migration of Yemenis, followed to a small extent by the arrival of students attracted by the high academic standards available in Britain (20).

During the Second World War, colonials were vital to the British war effort. Having been drafted to this country, they then remained in Britain during the period between 1939 and 1945 when full employment brought good prospects and benefits. Some decided to go back to their countries of origin at the end of the war, but many found it difficult returning to underdeveloped countries. Lower living standards, poverty, and unemployment 'pulled' some ex-servicemen back to Britain. Furthermore, Britain had begun to have

"more meaning" for some immigrants. It had "absorbed more of their lives than the tropical streets in which they had grown up" (21). So "a person who has once migrated and who has broken the bonds which tie him to a place in which he has spent his childhood is more likely to migrate again than is the person who has never previously migrated" (22).

The post-war period has seen the arrival of the largest number of Muslim immigrants. The links that had been established by colonialism and imperial rule meant that Britain was thought of as a land of wealth, full employment, and prosperity. The economic boom and development of manufacturing industry in Britain during the post Second World War period meant that there was an abundance of work opportunities for unskilled and semi-skilled workers.

The largest group of Muslims in Britain is from Pakistan (23). Some of them lived at one time in former West Pakistan, particularly in Mirpur, and others were from the Sylhet region. When considering immigration and ethnicity, there is perhaps a tendency to examine Pakistanis or Indians as a homogeneous group. But as Colin Holmes notes of Pakistanis, "migrants from the east and west of the country have little in common except their religion and sense of belonging to the same nation" (24). Many of Britain's Pakistani community migrated during or after the creation of Pakistan as an independent Islamic state in 1947. This event created a large number of refugees who saw no hope for improvement in their lives by remaining in Pakistan. Limited industrialization and poor land quality in rural areas at home were strong 'push' factors that initially drew Pakistani men to Britain. They intended initially to come to Britain for short-term employment. They would work for a number of years, then return home again bringing back to their families enough money to raise their standard of living. The prospect for the family's breadwinner to gain employment with the British forces or shipping industry seemed a way of avoiding poverty for the whole family.

A further impetus behind Pakistani immigration was the Pakistani government's decision to build a dam at Mangla in 1960. The intention behind this project was to produce more water and

electricity for large areas of the Punjab. The Mirpur region lost some two hundred and fifty of its villages (25), forcing members of these submerged communities to migrate. Once the migration process began, others were encouraged to follow. The compensation received as a result of the dam construction was used by some to buy a one-way ticket to Britain.

The early 1960's saw the arrival of many Asians from Africa. The independence of Kenya inaugurated a policy of Africanization, and the minority Asian communities were treated with suspicion and hostility. This produced strong pressures to migrate, as did a similar scenario in Uganda in 1972. President Idi Amin's regime prompted substantial numbers of Muslim refugees, who subsequently sought a home in Britain.

The rising numbers of immigrants during the 1960's began to give the government cause for concern. Legislative measures were taken to limit the influx, and by 1971 further tough measures had been taken to effectively halt immigration. Unrestricted immigration came to an end on 30th June 1962 with the Commonwealth Immigrants Act, which set down certain conditions for entry into Britain. But the restrictive legislation policy maintained by successive governments since the early 1960's led in fact to an increase in the coloured population. In order to 'beat the ban' of the restrictive immigration laws, large numbers of women and children came to join their husbands/fathers working in Britain. Permanent family settlement began to largely replace temporary male residence. Their arrival built up again the values of family and cultural loyalty.

In 1964 women and children represented sixty-six percent of all incoming migrants from Pakistan. By 1966 this had risen to ninety-three percent (26). Proportionally less income was sent back to home communities, and Muslims began investing more money in their communities in Britain. This was in many ways a symbolic as well as financial gesture; it was a way of saying 'our immediate future lies here in Britain'. Having become established in the U.K., it became an increasingly unattractive proposition to return to Pakistan, especially as the number of children in a family rose. It would have been

expensive to leave, and the benefits and standard of living in Britain were generally much higher than those, for example, in Pakistan.

The government's policy to limit immigration would have been more effective if restrictions had been placed on the length of stay in Britain. It is unlikely that the initial intentions of immigrants to stay temporarily in Britain would have changed. During the period prior to 1962, free and uncontrolled immigration was balanced by the economic needs of the country along the lines of 'supply and demand'. During a Commons debate on the Commonwealth Immigrants Bill (1961), Hugh Gaitskell observed that "there has been over the years an almost precise correlation between the movement in the numbers of unfilled vacancies and the immigration figures" (27). This scenario would perhaps have continued were it not for government policies. The ineffectiveness of the early immigration laws was matched by the paradox of worsening race relations as a result of the Race Relations Act of 1976.

As small Muslim communities began to develop through family reunion, these became contact and reception centres for other migrant Muslims. For the children of such communities, Britain became their home, and their parents' culture was somewhat alien to them. Migrants generally settled where expanding industrial activity opened up employment opportunities, such as in Birmingham, Bradford, Cardiff, Glasgow, the Lancashire mill towns, London, and Manchester.

"The concentration of immigrants to certain areas has resulted partly in the immigrants' need for identification, to establish a consciousness of a kind in a strange land. Concentration is for immigrant groups a strategy for survival" (28).

There are a number of surveys of the Muslim community in Britain which indicate more precisely the demographic details of settlement. It would be laborious to repeat the findings of earlier research, but mention of some statistical data would be useful. Muhammad Anwar's work *Pakistanis in Britain: a Sociological Study* (29), contains a wealth of information, some of which is detailed below. The estimated number of Pakistanis in Britain in 1985 was three hundred and fifty thousand with a slightly higher ratio of men to women (30). It is a

young community, with just over forty percent of the population under sixteen years of age (31). It is estimated that in 1984 nearly forty-five percent of Pakistanis were born in Britain (32).

With regard to South Asian immigrants in particular, there have been three important and well-defined periods of migration, whether to the West or to other continents. Ijaz Shafi Gilani notes...

"the first phase continued for about a century and was dominated by plantation labour. A second migration phase followed independence and involved manual labour as well as large numbers of skilled professionals. A third phase became important only a decade ago and is primarily directed toward the oil-rich countries of the Middle East (33).

The migration of significant numbers of Pakistanis to Britain falls directly within the parameters of the second phase.

3.3. The Institutional Dynamics of Religious Identity Maintenance for Muslim Minorities

"One must contemplate the nature of Muslim identity. The Muslim is the adherent of Islam, whose basis is the Qur'an, the Word of God, and the Sunnah, the life of the Prophet Muhammad. The whole of the Qur'an and Sunnah as exhortation, principles and prescription are the fundamental building blocks of what it means to be a Muslim. The nature and content of these original sources are the ultimate definition of Muslim identity, and will remain valid for all time" (34).

The nature and preservation of religious identity has become an important issue for Muslims living in the West. While the sources of Islam itself provide the most essential basis for this religious identity, there are various institutions within Islam that hold the key to building up, passing on, and maintaining identity. Faced as scholars are by the sheer diversity of the Muslim world and the subsequently numerous expressions of Islamic identity, one is forced to identify the common elements; those qualities of being a Muslim that are permanent and particularly Islamic. In the first place, the general institutional dynamics of identity formation and maintenance will be explored; and secondly, the more specific outworking of the various processes in relation to Muslims living in Britain. This

following section illustrates with specific reference to Islam and Muslims, the theoretical dynamics of identity and religious identity outlined in the previous chapter.

For a child born into a family adhering for the traditions of Islam, their identity as Muslims remains largely unquestioned. According to Islamic theology, each and every human being is born a Muslim, and Islam is the *din al-fitra*, the natural religion for humanity. Whether a person remains Muslim is determined by parental upbringing and general life experiences. In order to establish this identity at an early age, various rituals are performed. The first of these is the recitation of the *adhan* (call to prayer) into the baby's ear. From this point on they are formally called upon to be Muslim, and to remain loyal to this identity until death.

The procedure of naming a Muslim child is also another important factor in the construction of identity. Gulzar Haider notes...

"Naming of names...is a sacred duty. Names are important, alluded to in the very cosmogony of the Qur'an, as the primordial medium for the knowledge that God gave Adam. Names, in the Muslim psyche, are beyond being mere tags of individuality. They are the metaphysical intentions to transmit the good of those who have just passed by to those who have just arrived. Names are the trustees of today's aspirations for tomorrow. A name, consciously assigned, is the proof that what is considered precious in the past is hoped to continue for the future" (35).

The institution of the family is a central pillar upon which the identity of many Muslims rests. The interactions that take place within it are fundamental to the self-perception of its members. The whole dynamics of relationships between family members, the celebration of festivals, entertainment of guests, and the performance of *salat*, all work together to confirm identity.

The mosque is also an important Islamic institution. It houses most of the important identity-constructing and maintaining mechanisms outlined by Berger and Luckmann, as well as by Hans Mol. Here the individual defines himself through exchanges of interaction and roles, as well as through the performance of rituals, the narration of myths,

and so on. The *masdjid*, or mosque, becomes more than just a 'place of prostration'. It assumes the role of a locus for individual identity, a 'known' place of security, familiar customs, and a symbolic and metaphorical reference point in the believer's life. Many of the activities that take place in the mosque will play a part in ordering the subjective consciousness of a Muslim. As an institution, it implies a sense of historicity and control. This subtle coercive force further strengthens personal identity.

Activities in the mosque have significant spiritual meaning for practicing Muslims. Crossing the threshold of the mosque is a momentous act for a believer. Various rituals have developed to demarcate the mosque precinct from the everyday world. They serve to maintain and protect this important boundary, and can inculcate the spiritual preparation needed before prayer. A sense of God-consciousness (*taqwa*) is developed. The mere physical presence of a mosque not only establishes the identity of a neighbourhood, but also reinforces a Muslim's recognition of himself or herself as a member of the Islamic community. As a place for prayer (*salat*), the mosque has a practical and a symbolic role. It provides the essential separation of the individual from the everyday world. Many of the internal features of a mosque play a vital part in uniting a believer with the community. A sense of solidarity with a common history is inculcated by the presence of the niche (*mihrab*) in the centre of the *qiblah* wall. This serves as an indicator for the direction for prayer towards Makkah. As Muslims pray together, their identity is reinforced by the shared meanings and definitions of action that are institutionalized in mosque activities. The reality and meaning of being a Muslim is reaffirmed, especially during feasts and festivals.

The personal identity of a Muslim is shaped by the beliefs, theology and myths of Islam. Not only must these be examined as specific elements, but there must also be a recognition of them as part of a comprehensive whole. It is perhaps of great fortune to scholars of Islam, that a "simple and tidy creed" (36) - the *Shahadah* - acts as a focus for this overall perspective (37). As Cantwell Smith proposes, "to begin to understand it (the *Shahadah*) may be to go some distance, at least, towards understanding the position of those whose

faith it typifies" (38). To establish the way the profession of faith shapes the personal identity of a Muslim, one must recognise the scope of the *Shahadah*. From birth to death, this symbolic statement will be an ever present reality. As part of the *adhan*, a Muslim who prays at the mosque will hear five times a day this linguistic witness to the faith of Islam. The assertion of the *Shahadah* will reinforce the basic tenets of belief and thus the reality-orientation of the Muslim. In bearing witness to the unity of Allah, and the Prophethood of Muhammad, a believer is not simply asserting what they believe to be true, but what for them is "profoundly and cosmically true" (39). At the deepest level it is a statement which indicates a way of life: away from idolatry and polytheism; away from false values and human tyranny. Those who sincerely bear witness to the *Shahadah* re-focus their thoughts towards Allah, and the way of Islam.

Many Muslims have a profound awareness of Islamic history, and this can constitute a contour of their personal identity. This offers a framework for living. Wilfred Cantwell Smith expresses it thus...

"not only has Islamic history made Muslims, individually and corporately, what they have been; but also those Muslims, qua Muslims, have made Islamic history what it has been. Islamic history has made Muslims Muslim. Muslims have made Islamic history Islamic" (40).

Historical myths place a believer in a wider pattern of events. It links the individual to a...

"past glory of which he is both aware and proud. It stands imposingly behind him, bequeathing him traditions and institutions that have stood the test of age, and are bound to patterns of life that made his ancestors great" (41).

The *adhan* is perhaps the most poignant historical link between the individual and the past. It called the brothers and sisters of faith centuries ago, just as it calls the individual believer now. This profound sense of history, in terms of myths and theology, cannot fail to have a significant impact on the psyche of the individual believer.

The *adhan*, and the other symbols, rites and traditions which express the faith of Muslims, "lift the individual out of his humdrum workaday world and place him in a setting that is theocentric, facing God" (42). Considering again what Hans Mol proposed in respect to 'objectification', it is possible see how the *adhan* can "project meaning and order into a transcendent point of reference, making the variegated elements of mundane existence appear more consistent and timeless" (43).

To some extent, membership of the *ummah* shapes the personal identity of Muslims. Stephen Barton proposes that the feeling of belonging to a universal community is so fundamental to most Muslims that it can be used, especially when talking about Muslims in a minority context, to define "what it is to be a Muslim" (44). Barton quotes one of the authorities on Muslim minorities - M. Ali Kettani. He suggests that, "a person would be considered a "Muslim" as long as he feels, even vaguely, to be part of the overall Muslim *ummah* wherever he might be" (45).

Language is an inherent part of myth narration and the performance of rituals. Questions of language and identity are very complex, and defining their relationship can be problematic. But difficulties aside, an analysis of group identity involves examining the role of language in identity maintenance. John Edwards, in his book *Language, Society, and Identity* (46) gives a comprehensive analysis of language and group identity, especially when the 'group' refers to an ethnic or religious minority.

Language is one of a number of markers of group identity, and it is "well-nigh essential to the maintenance of group identity" (47). Other markers are considered by Edwards, and they include such things as ethnic background, geographical location, and social class. These variables, including language, can create a boundary between one group and another. For Frederick Barth (48) boundaries were a focal point between groups. While the culture contained within a group may change, and is inevitably bound to over time, the boundary around various cultural systems is more longstanding. Edwards writes, "cultural content is, of course, mutable - ethnic

groups are dynamic entities, particularly when they exist as minorities within developed societies - but boundaries are less so" (49). As such, symbols and markers of group identity become important ways of defining and encompassing the group. These include such things as religious rites of passage, ethnic foods, and so on.

British Muslims have generally created mosques and institutions along ethnic lines. Although their identity as Muslims may be uppermost in their minds, their ethnic origins do feature in their self perception, individually and collectively. Chain migration meant that people from a particular area of origin settled together in the same area on arrival in Britain. Ethnic identity is thus a factor in determining group identity. Edwards offers a definition of ethnic identity as...

"allegiance to a group - large or small, socially dominant or subordinate - with which one has ancestral links. Some sense of boundary must exist...sustained by shared objective characteristics (language, religion etc.), or by more subjective contributions to a sense of 'groupness', or by some combination of both" (50).

Language plays an important part in boundary maintenance, as a symbolic feature of group identity. Many Muslim parents are keen for their children to learn their mother-tongue, as well as Arabic, the language of Islam. As a purely human "method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires, by means of a system of voluntary produced symbols" (51), language has meaning due to the shared agreement of its conventions. The enormous range of languages and dialects reflects the various linguistic conventions claimed by groups. Their unique language or dialect ensures their distinctive view of reality. Steiner (52) speaks of the different languages as a means used by groups to keep secret the "inherited, singular springs of their identity" (53).

For many Muslims of all ethnic backgrounds, the mother-tongue may have both a communicative and symbolic function. Urdu, Gujarati, Bengali, and Arabic can become "emblems of groupness" (54), and symbolic rallying points that reinforce a sense of group identity.

Language can have numerous historical associations which members of the group share. In particular, it is a reminder of national origins.

Ali Shari'ati expresses something of the function of language in religion. His words illustrate how language can reinforce identity through narration of myths, and recitation of scriptures.

"The language of religion and particularly the language of the Semitic religions, in whose Prophets we believe, is a symbolic language...that expresses meaning through symbols and images. The language that a religion chooses in order to convey its concepts must be versatile and multi-faceted" (55).

Language and conversation are important vehicles of reality-maintenance, allocating experiences in definite places in the world. For many Muslims, the mosque is the venue par excellence for shared understandings of reality. Conversations of gestures and nuances of language are comprehended, especially during prayer. "Salat is a communal physical act, like gym or PT: by performing it with others the individual not only turns his thoughts to God...he merges his individuality with the group, reinforcing his sense of group identity" (56). Language is therefore more than just a linguistic matter. Body language can assume an important role as a system of signification to maintain the common objectifications of everyday religious life. The mosque is thus a place of established and culturally defined behaviour which expresses the rules, definitions and norms of a Muslim community. Group identity is maintained along instrumentalist lines, in order to "maximize collective...interests" (57).

Group identity extends beyond the mosque to the areas of settlement in which Muslims live. The mosque thus becomes part of the boundary around the community. Many of Britain's Muslim communities have completed a process of institutional completeness that heightens group identity. Ethnic dress shops, hardware stores, *halal* butchers, and the like, allow Muslims to stay within a transplanted culture, maximizing a sense of belonging and unity. During religious festivals and celebrations, Islamic street decorations in areas with a high Muslim population reinforce group solidarity. They can strengthen the boundary between 'us' who share collective

meanings, and 'they' who do not. Many Muslims have emphasized this on a more personal level by placing '*Shahadah*' stickers over their front door lintel, or on the door itself. For them, this can be an important signification mechanism, since it makes a proclamation about the identity of the inhabitants. Inside the home, religious decorations emphasise this still further. For Muslims in Britain, such means to identify the home can have practical, as well as psychological value. Such symbols and signs will have meaning to most Muslims, and they indicate a home wherein a Muslim may find shelter and a place to pray. Where a number of households have clearly identified their religious orientation, the boundary between communities is solidified, thus reinforcing the group identity of the neighbourhood.

3.4. Three Generations of British Muslim Identity

During the course of the past forty years, the Muslim community in Britain has undergone a process of internal maturation. As different generations have grown up, each has expressed and evolved a new identity, resting upon, and developing out of, the experiences of the previous generation and their relationship with British society. The three broad age-groups now existing view themselves, their integration with the wider community, and their own institutional facilities, with differing perspectives. The following three sections will explore each of these varying modes of 'being' and 'belonging'.

3.4.1. The New Arrivals

The first Muslim immigrants faced particular identity problems. They were juggling multiple self-perceptions - of immigrant, Muslim, Pakistani/Bangladeshi etc., citizen, parent - leading for many to a confused sense of personal identity. It was perhaps out of this situation that, paradoxically, Muslims realized some of the more enduring features of their identity and the necessary institutions for its survival. Religious facilities were of paramount importance as the immutable sense of being **Muslim** remained with them as a way of expressing their cultural identity...hence the rapid increase in the number of mosques after 1960.

"The first generation of migrants often becomes more religiously active than they were in the homeland. Religion provides possibilities to overcome feelings of isolation and disorientation. Religious commitment will protect them against loss of identity and alienation" (58).

Many first generation immigrants consider their country of origin as 'home'. On the whole their national and cultural, as well as religious identity is central to their self-perception. But simply due to the decreasing influence of the first generation due to its passing away, the *cultural* dimension of identity is less secure. The mother-tongue retains communicative as well as symbolic functions for a large proportion of the first generation community. Even today, many of the now elderly first generation migrants still only speak their first language, particularly among women. Many of the tradition-orientated customs of the sending society have been accorded religious sanctioning. Levels of religious understanding are in general fairly low, and the differences between customs and Islam are often unrecognized. The feeling many immigrants had, particularly in the early years of settlement of estrangement from their 'roots' led to an adherence and revival of customs and cultural practices, in an attempt to capture a sense of continuity between their past and present lives.

Few of the early migrants have the economic resources to leave Britain. Furthermore, they are in many ways committed to their families who have made this country their homeland. "The differences between the attitudes, experiences and frameworks of reference of first and second generation Muslims have naturally created some tensions between them" (59). This generation was and is the least likely to involve itself in the wider society any more than necessary. As a consequence of the 'myth of return', this generation have largely remained within the bounds of their immediate religious/ethnic enclaves. Many have held onto the "absolute value of their previous identity" (60) gained from their lives before migration. Living under the shadow of their former lives, many of the customs and practices of say, Pakistan, have been imported to Britain. But these migrants were not the educated city dwellers of such sending societies; there they were poor, often illiterate, and of

rural background. Many of the lifestyle patterns of the Indian sub-continent have remained with this generation. Though faith and custom are often confused, the attitudes of this generation are shaped by their understanding of Islam, limited thought it may be. Many of the norms for social interaction - resting upon community solidarity, stability, and conservation of values - which originated from Pakistan have been maintained in order to preserve identity. For women in particular, traditions from the homeland are reinforced as a result of minimal contact with the outside world in Britain, and in many cases, a perception of it as an alien threat.

Verity Saifullah-Khan's study on Mirpuri's in Bradford referred to in the first chapter points to some of the identity structures of the first generation. She noted that identity is founded upon the social relationships within the *biraderi* and contact with those from the same region in Pakistan. Another important characteristic of first generation identity rests on the concepts of honour and reputation (*izzat*). By conforming to certain patterns and standards of behaviour, reputations are upheld for the whole family. Those who break the taboos may find themselves ostracized. Any individual who finds his or herself outcast from the community loses something of their selfhood.

"The concept of an individual self apart from a family, kin and village is beyond comprehension. Personality is less important than status, and individualism as we know it is neither highly cherished nor desirable. A man or woman in Pakistani society must be conceptualized as existing in a complex network of rights and duties which extend from the central core of his immediate family to a wide set of kin relationships. He, or she, is not an individual agent acting on his own behalf but exists only in relation to family and kin" (61).

In many ways, personal identity rests upon group identity and family reputation for the first generation. Identities are unquestioned, taken-for-granted and ascribed to them because of the family to which they belong. This contrasts somewhat to the identity of the second generation...those who came to Britain as teenagers or young adults.

3.4.2. The Go-betweens

For second generation Muslims in Britain, there appeared to be a different form of identity confusion. "Although they are often described as second generation 'immigrants', they feel that they are not immigrants at all, but first generation British Muslims" (62). For this generation in particular, biculturalism has tended to lead to the development of two identities and dual roles divided between personal and family ties. In other words, they are familiar with patterns of behaviour prevalent in their countries of origin, and yet they are able to practice some of the necessary norms of social interaction for successful communication in Britain. They can employ two perhaps contradictory behaviour patterns according to the situation and circumstances in which they find themselves. This generation are perhaps the most adept in dislocating themselves culturally from one system of meanings into another according to circumstances. But in terms of identity, the "simultaneous fostering of conflicting norms, objectives and expectations in regard to the same act" (63) may have led to a confused sense of self-perception for some.

This generation in many ways confronted the possibilities for choice in terms of lifestyle that living in Britain afforded. Pressures to conform to certain standards and patterns of behaviour were an inherent part of village life in Pakistan; but in Britain, living in large cities, the opportunities for non-conformity were easily available, testing the religious identity of the individual. The second generation Muslim could decide, more than their parents, whether to allow Islam to dominate all areas of their life.

"The common set of values and categories which constitute the villagers' world view of 'cognitive orientation' are not questioned. They are based on certain premises and sets of assumptions which are not consciously recognised" (64).

Compared to their parents, many of whose lives had never before contained possibilities for choice, the second generation living in Britain have been poignantly aware of the whole conceptual category of 'alternatives'.

In constituting a generational bridge between the early migrants and the current young generation, the 'go-betweens' have lessened the strong 'in-group' - 'out-group' separation that was an inherent part of their parents' identity. Amongst this group, the sense of being 'us' against 'them' has receded. But major cultural conflict between the second generation and their parents have not been such a problem as between the second and third generations. This is due to their particular identity characteristics. As Bhikhu Parekh suggests...

"the second generation is far less 'Westernized' than is generally realized by others, and even the individual's innermost identity remains essentially Asian, and, secondly, the structure of an Asian family is extremely closer-knit and characterized by considerable emotional interdependence. As a result, the young people growing up without establishing firm notions of the self, cannot exist outside the supportive relationship of the family. They may intellectually subscribe to Western values but their emotional being is almost entirely un-Western" (65).

Written some sixteen years ago, Parekh describes a facet of second generation identity. But the contrast with the youngsters can be seen in the light of his comments. They are a generation who are unwilling to grow up *without* 'firm notions of the self', and who are far less 'Asian' than their parents.

Where first generation migrant women were once largely invisible, even within their own communities, there are increasing numbers of Muslim women of the second generation who have been taking a full and active part in life outside of the home and *biraderi*. The pioneering women of this group have repeatedly called for religious facilities at mosques in order that their needs may be met. They are no longer content that the men of the community should ignore their religious rights. Many first generation women were unaware of these rights, and still in a state of culture-shock due to migration, hence their inactivity and lack of assertiveness.

For those Muslims who have been educated and raised in Britain - as some of the second generation have - their commitments and roles are different from those of their parents. They do not live with the 'myth of return' and many are committed to building up those

institutions and power structures that will help their children to be British Muslims. Those who were educated in Britain have been at an advantage compared to those who were not; "school equips children for more extensive relationships than their parents have experienced" (66). Therefore, members of the second generation who have experienced life at school have often been in a better position for interaction outside of their communities, and in understanding the identity dilemmas of their children.

"Education in Britain instills the fundamental values of Western society, of independence and individuality. Confronted with an awareness of a different life from that of the home, the child begins to question, and reject certain features of the accepted traditional scheme of things. As yet, the number of 'protestors' are too few to support and gain confidence from each other" (67).

This last point shows the now dated nature of Saifullah-Khan's study. For it is the current young generation who have at their disposal various organizations and support-systems in order to carve out their own niche in British society and establish a religious identity as, first and foremost, Muslims.

3.4.3. The Inheritors

"Islam as a way of life encompasses the 'whole' and was not devised in, or for, a highly compartmentalized way of life, with distinct economic, political and social arenas and interactions" (68).

The current generation of young Muslims - those aged roughly between sixteen and twenty-five - are perhaps the first generation of real British Muslims. They are twice removed from the migration experience of their ancestors, though many of them may have spent relatively short periods of time there for holidays. The religious identity of this generation rests on the result of their interpretation of Islam...but in many ways minus the cultural baggage in which it came to Britain; this is compounded of course by an attempt to understand Islam in its British setting. They are trying to understand Islam as a *din* or 'way of life' despite the individualism of the West.

The parents and grandparents of this generation have been accused of trying to create 'little Pakistans' in Britain. Where the elder members of the community try to remain in a singular world view - a continuation from their lives in Pakistan - the youngsters have seen the futility of this given the highly pluralistic character of British society. Similarly, the young generation have a very different attitude to time compared to that of their parents. They are looking to the future as a way of organising the present, contrary to their parents who used their experiences of the past to structure life in the present. It is a matter of contrast between first generation identity based on 'who we were', compared to an identity of the young orientated around 'who we want to be'.

The identity of 'the inheritors' is shaped less by nationalist ties with their country of origin. Since they are further removed from it compared to their parents, many of the cultural practices of Pakistan, for example, mean little to them. Their setting in Britain means that many Pakistani norms and practices simply do not make sense. But this has not meant they have thrown out 'the baby with the bathwater'. It is as if some filtering mechanism has been going on, where only the more enduring and meaningful practices remain. Many of these have some bearing on Islamic values. More than any generation before them, the third generation are in the best position to 'pick the best of two worlds'.

'The inheritors' feel a frustration with the marginalization both they and their parents may have faced. As they try to 'break-out' into full and active lives outside of their communities, they come across barriers. Some of these stem from prejudices in the wider society - such as racism - and others originate from closer to home - such as traditionalism on the part of community elders and inter-ethnic/religious rivalry.

In order to gain a fuller and more precise understanding of third generation identity for Muslims in Britain today, there needs to be a greater understanding of how they have been affected by the plurality of ideologies amid which their own religious identity has

been shaped. This is the issue that the following chapter seeks to address.

Chapter Three Notes

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- (3) Penelope Johnstone, Millet or Minority - Muslims in Britain, in Victor Hayes (ed), *Identity Issues and World Religions*, Australian Association for the Study of Religions, 1986.
- (4) *ibid.*, p176.
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- (6) *ibid.*, p100.
- (7) *ibid.*, p101.
- (8) *ibid.*, p102.
- (9) *ibid.*
- (10) *ibid.*, p124.
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CHAPTER FOUR

Chapter Four - Characteristics of Third Generation Identity

4.1. The Decline of Tradition

The overarching context in which the quest for identity of Muslim youth takes place is that of modernity. Traditional lifestyles and worldviews appear to be losing their hold for many of them. 'Tradition' in its own right no longer "offers an organising medium of social life" (1) for large numbers of young Muslims. Anthony Giddens suggests some possible consequences of this...

"The individual is forced to negotiate lifestyle choices among a diversity of options. Because of the 'openness' of social life today, the pluralization of contexts of action and the diversity of 'authorities', the lifestyle choice is increasingly important in the constitution of self-identity and daily activity" (2).

Third generation Muslims appear to be making *different* lifestyle choices from their parents. Finding themselves socialized into a society characterized by modernity and plurality has meant *adapting* identity-maintaining systems to the social milieu of Britain. Ritual, myth, objectification, commitment, institutions, roles and so on, are having to take on new dimensions.

For those Muslims born and raised in this country, some of the beliefs of their parents may originate from the superstitions of peasant culture (3). While their parents' belief systems may correspond to the life-experiences of those living in rural Pakistan or India, they may not accord with the life experiences of those who have been born and educated in the West. "We can decide whether a belief is true or false by comparing it to the bit of the world it corresponds to" (4). Young Muslims have discovered that some of their parents' beliefs do not correspond to their own experiences. This has often led to a rejection of certain parental values and norms. A potentially positive result of this for Islam is a fresh understanding of it in a Western setting. The pillars of Islam can emerge from the entanglements of culture and superstition.

The identity of young Muslims is in many ways quite different from that of their parents. Part of the new identity appears to be characterized by a spirit of participation, but without the loss of a sense of being Muslim for many. There are many young people of Pakistani/Indian/Bangladeshi origin who may appear to be quite 'secularized' and fully accommodated to life in Britain. But even though *practice* of Islam may be a minor preoccupation for many of them, they are still keen to regard themselves as Muslim. For a smaller minority, Islam indeed forms the basis for their contours of life, and their identity as Muslims is of paramount importance, in theory as well as in practice. In other words, over and above national identity - whether of the Indian sub-continent or Britain - religious identity appears to be remarkably enduring. In the face of so many competing, and largely secular ideologies, this may be surprising. The large proportion of this chapter will explore the dynamics of this.

For many, both from the third and previous generation, the phenomenon of being 'caught between two cultures' is of particular significance with regard to identity. The result is a rather schizophrenic self-perception as a result of being one person at home, and behaving and thinking in different ways when removed from the parental environment. As the experience of Islam in Britain continues, this phenomenon appears to be lessening. As accommodation takes place in terms of many cultural practices, the division between the home and the outside world is likely to reduce. All this appears to point towards the emergence in the future of an overriding *single* identity based upon Islam, with national (or other) identities 'tacked-onto' the periphery of this 'core identity'.

The religious education provided by the British Muslim community to its young people has had an impact on changing identity. There are still many tradition-orientated teachers in *madrassah's* who simply instruct children to recite the Qur'an, without explaining the meanings. But this trend is beginning to change as its inadequacy as the sole basis for religious instruction proves itself. In her study of young Muslim women in Birmingham (1985), R. Sharif quotes some of her interviewees as saying...

"I think my generation is very different, they'll know more of what's in the Qur'an because they'll read it and understand it for themselves whereas my parents' generation were told by others in the family, they don't know for themselves. I think we would be more true than our parents. Their knowledge is traditions, but ours will be more religious".

"I think more and more girls will turn to Islam to find a way out of their problems, the problems of their parents and the society".

"My Mum is always telling me to read the *namaz* and the Qur'an sharif but I think if we really did go deeply into Islam we would question them even more and they wouldn't want that" (5).

Many young people have felt alienated from the Islam steeped in the traditions of the Indian sub-continent. They have felt the inadequacy of simply being able to read the Qur'an without any understanding of the meanings; the pressures upon them in British society make the message of the Qur'an of important significance. Furthermore, they have sensed the often insufficient explanations given by their parents to the questions and difficulties that their location in Britain brings. This has encouraged many of them to understand the Qur'an better in order to be able to challenge their parents. For example, one girl in Sharif's study was dissatisfied by her mother's justification for not cutting her hair..."if you cut your hair, they become snakes when you die" (6).

For all the generations of Muslims living in Britain, they have identified with Islam first and foremost, but the understanding of that religious identity has changed and is now less culturally-based. The alienation of the different generations has often had a different characteristic; but where the early generations may have immersed themselves in the cultural trappings of Islam, the third generation appear to be seeking from Islam the comforts that religion affords universally...such as peace, a way of life, a understanding of metaphysical issues. In the face of the numerous ideological challenges facing young Muslims, their enduring sense of being Muslim needs to be investigated to see how this diversity has shaped third generation self-perceptions.

4.2. The Impact of Secularism, Liberalism, Materialism, Pluralism, and Individualism

Situations of plurality throw the boundaries of a minority community into sharper focus. In view of the lack of a single "comprehensive world view", a religious group must "organise itself to support its meaning system" (7). As the next chapter will demonstrate, this organisation' takes a number of different forms. The secularist ideology that pervades much of British life makes the religious worldview harder to sustain. Religion can appear less credible and religious definitions of reality may seem less plausible. Secularism has implications not just for groups of religious people; it also affects individuals in "secularizing their consciousness" (8), and can lead to a person living their life without being able to apply religious interpretations to their experiences or worldview.

Given the many religious groups and ideologies within Britain today, for the purposes of identity construction it is important to distinguish between...

"situations in which an entire society serves as the plausibility structure (such as Pakistan or Saudi Arabia) for a religious world and situations in which only a subsociety serves as such. In other words, the 'social engineering' problem differs as between religious monopolies and religious groups seeking to maintain themselves in a situation of pluralistic competition. It is not difficult to see that the problem of world maintenance is less difficult of solution in the former instance. When an entire society serves as the plausibility structure for a religiously legitimated world, *all the important social processes within it serve to confirm and reconfirm the reality of this world*" (9 my italics and bracket).

In an atmosphere of secularism and plurality, identity may be sacralized by any number of agencies besides the religious. The absoluteness of a religious identity may be thrown into question, and its religious content relativized. Its status as a taken-for-granted, objective state of affairs will become questionable given the diversity around which its construction has taken place. Identity and 'reality'...

"insofar as (they are) still maintained by the individual, (they are) apprehended as being rooted within the consciousness...rather than in any facticities of the external world. Religion no longer refers to the cosmos or to history, but to individual existence or psychology" (10).

The dilemma posed to Islam by secularism comes about due to the inherently sacred nature of life for a Muslim, set against the implicitly irreligious character of modern existence. Islam recognises and identifies with a spiritual world. Where for a Muslim nearly every significant action (and many are) will be preceded by *Bismillah* - in the name of Allah, the rest of the world largely excludes or ignores the religious dimension. The reality of the religious nature of life is less likely to be reflected back to a Muslim living in the modern Western world, except when interacting with other Muslims. In contrast, a Muslim living in Pakistan will find evidence of its Islamic ethos all around; even road signs may carry religious statements (11).

The atmosphere of secularism, especially the dualistic division between sacred and secular realms that pervades life in Britain, will contrast strongly with the Muslim's sense of the wholeness of life. A Muslim will not make the rigid division between the spiritual and the worldly, but rather see all facets of life as governed by Allah and the way of Islam. Many actions will have some meaning for a Muslim, and will remind him or her of their religious identity. But under the influence of the education system in particular, life is examined in a compartmentalized fashion. In his book *Belief in a Mixed Society*, Christopher Lamb notes the complaints of Pakistani parents regarding the ethos of the education system.

"They dislike its secular spirit and the absence of any overarching religious principle. They particularly dislike the separation which tends to be made between religious studies and morality - a favourite theme of humanists. Muslim, Hindus, Sikhs and Jews are at one in rejecting a secular base for ethics" (12).

The question for the future is whether this will lead to a 'secularization of consciousness'? Will the fact that the reality of

Islam is not reflected back from the learning environment in which a young Muslim is growing up affect their religious identity?

In his book on Islam in Britain, Muhammad Raza (13) outlines some of the effects on identity from the secular, material environment into which young Muslims are being socialized. His concern is particularly with boys. He argues that they are more free from the restricting influence of family reputation (*izzat*) than girls, and that once they begin employment, they are at liberty to become caught up in materialist interests. In other words, status symbols can become rival identity constructing mechanisms to religious ideology, particularly to those unsure of their own identities and background. The whole value system implicit in the media and general society imbibes a different way of seeing the world, and it has affected Muslim youth. One is as likely to see a group of Muslim youth walking down a street in Bradford wearing prayer caps (*topis*) and *shalwar kameez* as on the other side of the street a group wearing the latest 'designer' fashions and listening to the most recent popular music on stereo headsets. This symbolizes the clash and conflict of identity. Shabbir Akhtar expresses it thus...

"there are signs of lapse and confusion within orthodox religious communities. On the level of external observance, there is no cause for alarm. But beneath the surface the perceptive observer can discern all the familiar paradoxes of a great religious civilization in the throes of secularity....Men entertain a general religious view about the nature of life and the world - as a matter of religious obligation - but simultaneously entertain a secular view about daily life in practice" (14).

It would seem that the concept of *niyah* or intention has lost its scope for many Muslims. For example, work has become less an act of *ibadah* (worship) and rather a matter of economic necessity. Religion has become another dimension of a compartmentalized life, and Islam may have been reduced, for many, to simply poor practice of the five pillars.

Under the pressure of being a minority group in a plural society, many Muslims of all generations have lost the focus of the important issues necessary for their identity and survival. Under conditions of

being in a majority, the past and present history of the faith are harmonized. But when in a minority, the attention falls on secondary dimensions of the religion and..."more with the instruments and symbols of identity and security than with questions of primary religious importance" (15). Translated into the British situation, evidence for this can be seen in many of the peripheral issues in which some Muslims devote a high proportion of their time. Therefore, mosque wranglings centred around the length of an imam's beard, or the constitution of the mosque committee divert attention and energy away from more pressing issues. But some of these manoeuvres can be seen as an attempt to formalize a community's relationship with outsiders: by laying down precise rules and regulations surrounding power relationships both within the community and in its relationship to outsiders; by stressing the norms which should govern family life, diet, money, as well as religious occasions, the community necessarily cements its identity *vis-a-vis* the wider society. When mixed with attitudes of prejudice towards members of other faiths or ideologies, the tenuous identity of the community is strengthened. "Preaching against prejudice is relatively useless when specific forms of prejudice and scapegoating fulfill basic functions for personality and group integration, and when national, social, group, or personal identity are fragile" (16).

The plural situation for Muslims in Britain effects all sections of the community, but the influence upon women in particular is worth mentioning. Perhaps the ideology of feminism could for the purpose of the argument here be placed under the general umbrella of 'liberalism'. For many young women, life in Britain has afforded more opportunities than what their mother's or grandmother's experienced. Seeing the situation of women around them in the wider society in terms of career prospects and community involvement, many Muslim women have become dissatisfied with the restrictive lives that culture has imposed upon them. What does this mean for identity?

"Islam has functioned, through its divinely authorized social system, to provide identity for its members by drawing the social boundaries of individual existence in relationship to other members. Under the pressures of today, the identity provided is no longer coordinate with the aspirations of some people, many of whom are women, or at least the straightforward answers of the past no

longer prove sufficient in responding to modern questioning" (17).

In the face of this, educated women have recognised the rights and protection that Islam gives them. The more ambitious among them have struggled to implement these rights in the face of male opposition. The traditional identity-boundaries for women have been challenged and re-assessed, leading to the growth of many innovative movements and organizations among women. The impact of these upon community identity will be discussed in a following chapter, but for now it is poignant to highlight the challenges that Islam's location in the West poses to its female members.

The environment of the school is the institution in Western society which is likely to be in stark contrast to the environment of a Muslim home; the latter will take its inter-personal organisation and dynamics, construction of reality, and ethos from Islam. In the environment of the school, the child or young person is exposed to many more identificational role-models than many of their parents either experienced or understand. The cognitive dissonance this may cause in the child can result in a number of responses: a rejection of their religious identity, maintenance of it, or a re-interpretation of Islam which errs towards a more metaphysical understanding.

This situation has led to creative innovations on the part of some young Muslims. As a result of the individually-orientated nature of Western society, different dimensions of Islamic practice have been given emphasis. Andrew Rippin has perceived that...

"what might be termed the politicization of Muslims, a world-wide phenomenon in Islam but especially prevalent in diaspora populations in North America and Europe, has led to a heightened sense of identity being felt through the affirmation of distinctive Islamic practices. Another way of expressing this is as 'the Islamization of the self', and the use of Islamic symbols to provide identity on a personal level" (18).

Some young Muslims in Britain under the pressures of the society around them, have 'claimed' Islam as a way of ascribing a positive identity for themselves, rather than as an inheritance of their parents. Some, while having nonetheless been born and raised as

Muslims, have at a later time in life re-affirmed their commitment to Islam. The result has often been that the five daily prayers and practice of fasting become important personal statements of identity. As opposed to the religious identity of their parents - one based upon a collective community identity - the identity of later generations bears the hallmarks of challenge from surrounding ideologies, most especially individualism. The *hijab* is as much for some women a religious duty, as at the same time a statement of who they are, and a way of marking themselves out from the rest of the society. And perhaps as never before we are living in a society that encourages and admires individuality, originality, and self-confidence. But individualism can have a price. In the words of one scholar, the legacy of rationalist individuality was a person's inability to..."preserve a sense of the wholeness and identity of self against the very currents which were supposed to both liberate and emphasize this wholeness and identity of self" (19).

However, the character of this personalization of faith, on the part of young Muslims, and impingement of modernity upon Islam, can be identified in more than just the practice of the so called 'five pillars' of Islam. Questions are not so much being asked of the plausibility and legitimacy of, for example, *salat*, but of what place it has in modern life and the self-identity of Muslims who practice it. This is where much debate lies for young educated Muslims...how to live as Muslims in the West. It is worth quoting again Jorgen Nielsen's view of this process among British Muslims...

"many young people are undergoing a process of education and socialization where the other cultural experiences of the wider society present viable alternatives. Certainly, some are choosing the path of breaking with an Islamic identity altogether. But there are indications that a growing number of youth...are engaged in the reapplication of Islamic sources. It is here that some of the most radical new formulation of Islamic ideals may be found. This is a process which involves a break with the inherited gender and authority-related patterns of Muslim life, and also an at least partial discarding of the traditional sources for the expression of the specific Islamic identity. Dress codes, methods of arranging marriages, gender-roles are, in these circumstances, losing their importance as symbols of Islam. The emphasis appears to be changing towards the underlying values of ethical and spiritual principles.

With time, it may be expected that the basic Islamic principles identified through this process will, in turn, lead to new cultural forms of expressing Islamic identity" (20).

Much of what Nielsen observes can be seen as taking place among significant numbers of young Muslims. However, for some, the very cultural symbols of Islam identified by Nielsen still remain important dimensions of their identity. The change may be simply that these expressions are fully underpinned by an engagement and reaffirmation of Islamic sources, rather than as simply a matter of tradition or parental preference.

Another way in which individualism can be seen as having an effect on Muslim identity rests on the notion of *izzat* - family honour or reputation. Although this is a particularly *Asian* concept, it is one that has shaped the Muslim identity of the Indian sub-continent and was thus part of the cultural baggage that early migrants brought to Britain. *Izzat* affects the whole family, *biraderi*, and its status and position in the social network. It has implications particularly when it comes to the marriage of daughters: a damaged *izzat* will take its toll on the chances of the future bride, and her sisters. Although in Britain concepts of honour and reputation do exist, they are more related to individuals, rather than to the family. In their study of Asians in Britain, Mary Stopes-Roe and Raymond Cochrane interviewed different generations about *izzat*. This is what they found...

"to 94% of both fathers and mothers, but only to 57% of sons and daughters, was *izzat* very important. (Some) daughters denied it more vigorously. 'I'm not bothered - they can talk if they like'; 'Family business should be kept private'; 'I don't take any notice of anybody else, it makes no difference to me'" (21).

For the young generation today, this notion of *izzat* is less important for them than their parents, and family life a more private concern. Here it is possible to see the impact of a more individualistic way of seeing life, hand in hand with the privacy that goes with it (22). Similarly, more young Muslim married couples are challenging the assumption that they must live with the husband's family on marriage. While this has been common practice in the past, for those that can afford it, they are trying to live slightly more removed from

the extended family. This does not mean that they have left their community; many still rely on the emotional support of the *biraderi*, but they are perhaps less reliant upon it than their parents. "In spite of the great differences between and within social, group, and personal identities, they all have in common a tendency towards internal unity and the meshing of parts" (23). Perhaps this explains why young Muslims have not done anything *particularly* radical in their search for an identity *vis-a-vis* the older generation.

It is beginning to be evident that the extended/joint family system of living is losing its appeal for many young Muslims. Many have discovered that while Islam emphasizes respect and care for one's family, this does not necessarily mean that one has to live under the same roof. In a study conducted by Muhammad Anwar...

"fifty-eight per cent of young Muslims agreed with the statement: 'When I have a home of my own, I would prefer to have only my husband/wife and children living with me'. The main reasons for preferring to live in a nuclear family were privacy, independence and 'having a home of one's own' (24).

The early history of the Muslims in Britain showed that many religious organizations, and mosques in particular, operated along ethnic and sectarian lines. Bangladeshis would pray in one mosque, Pakistanis in another. However, as English becomes the common language medium of the third generation, these linguistic barriers and those associated with them are weakening, along with the rigidity that previously characterized them. Though retaining ethnic loyalties, many younger Muslims see themselves as part of a universal *ummah*, and they have chosen to emphasise those elements of Islam that unite believers of all backgrounds. There is a sense of disillusionment at the divisions and boundaries of previous generations. The saying, 'united we stand, divided we fall' seems to have application and resonance for many young Muslims. Furthermore, some of the events that have affected Muslims in Britain, such as the Rushdie affair, have had a uniting effect, and have illustrated the common religious identity.

British Muslim identity appears to be evolving...away from irrelevant cultural components, towards the necessary strengths for survival. Migration has set about an evolutionary process of adaptation according to the environment. There is a dynamic interplay going on between young Muslims and their relationship to the wider society that is quite unlike that of their parents, largely due to the weakening influence of *cultural* boundaries. The essential question is how far they allow integration to go without compromising their religious identity.

There have been identity casualties among Muslim youth, especially those who have not been able to successfully synthesize the different aspects of their lives. Under the pressures of modernity from the wider society, and traditionalism within community confines, self-esteem may suffer. Much of Erikson's comments regarding the necessity for freedom and experimentation in adolescence to establish identity-esteem come into play here. But it is sometimes not until after this period that Muslim young people have this 'space'. It can then occur that being Muslim eventually becomes a discovered identity on the part of the individual, rather than imposed from the weight of generations past. With 'space' and freedom, their Islamic identity is less assigned and ascribed by birthright, but rather chosen and cherished.

"For identity development has its time, or rather two kinds of time: a *developmental stage* in the life of the individual, and a *period* in history. There is, then, a complementarity of life-history and history. But the crisis of youth is also the crisis of a generation and of the ideological soundness of its society. (There is also a complementarity of identity and ideology)" (25).

In a few words, Erikson sums up conceptually some of the themes that are emerging from the third generation. But it is worth noting here that the processes outlined by Erikson are not just affecting the Muslim community itself. The presence of different cultures and faiths in Britain is having an impact on a period of *British* identity. This is being adjusted and re-shaped due to the new pluralism. Even within the Muslim community itself, there has had to be a realization of the difference between religion and culture as Muslims from different parts of the world discover variations in their practice

of Islam. Returning to the theme earlier in the paragraph, it is worth re-emphasizing that an ascribed individual identity that is 'carried' by a community is not perhaps as strong as one worked-out and realized on an individual level.

In his book *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion*, Ernest Gellner notes the problem that modernity poses to religious commitment. He writes that "modernism extracts all demand, challenge and defiance from doctrine/revelation" (26). It therefore seems paradoxical that in the face of this, a number of Muslim youth are seeking to be demanded and challenged by their faith. Many are actively wanting to investigate and commit themselves to the teachings of Islam. In the examination of Hans Mol's work on religious identity, *commitment* was cited as an important dimension of that identity. For the third generation, their commitments and challenges are being re-assessed, and many are adhering to their faith in a different way from their parents; thus their religious identity often has a distinctive nature. They appear to want to be committed, but to WHAT, WHY, and HOW are the important questions. Many want to set themselves apart from some of the allegiances of the first generation. This may be expressed in Gellner's words.

"Faith can be seen, not so much as commitment, as the celebration of community. Affirmation of the supernatural is de-coded as expression of loyalty to a social order and its values" (27).

The third generations have been questioning the 'social order and its values', since bound up with those that have religious significance are many that are simply *cultural* practices with an overlay of religious justification. It has meant that they have had to ask questions as to exactly WHAT it is they are committed to. Those ideas of previous generations that have no bearing on their situation in Britain have been discarded in place of one's that do. In essence it is the quest for a religious identity consonant with life in Britain, rather than, for example, Pakistan. Customs which have no meaning for the younger generations are being filtered out, making way for the incorporation of new understandings of commitment.

Gellner outlines some different responses to modernity: fundamentalism, relativism, or enlightened rationalism. Roughly his three positions can be considered as: a) firm, uncompromising faith; b) a rejection of unique truth for a position of cultural relativity on matters of religion; and, c) a recognition of unique truth, but in practice societies are unable to possess or reflect it. Some members of the younger generation in Britain appear to be seeking an identity based primarily on the first option. The success of some radical Muslim groups among the young is evidence for this. But for the so-called 'fundamentalists' there is a problem...

"they have noticed that the society which harbors hermeneutists, as it harbors so much else, is pervaded by pluralism, doubt, half-heartedness and an inability to take its own erstwhile faith literally and practice it to the full. They are not quite clear whether they despise it for its tolerance, or rebuke it for not being tolerant enough, notably of their own intransigence: they are liable to be pervaded by both these sentiments at once" (28).

Times of tension between Muslims in Britain and the wider society, especially during the Rushdie affair, highlighted this dilemma. On the one hand there is freedom to express controversial ideas, while on the other, no protection for those who feel these ridicule their faith. Many in the wider society sought to champion the rights of free speech over and against those who wished to protect religious sentiments.

Muslims with a strong and fervent faith seem to defy all the secularist, liberal trends. It is as if they are completely unaffected by it. Or are they? It is possible to argue that their fervour is another *reaction* to the perhaps anti-religious and relativist ideologies that pervade the West. Those who hold to unswerving convictions may be regarded as adhering to "a system of beliefs and practices which treat scriptural absolutism as *the* way to counter the pluralism and relativism engendered by modernity" (29). This stance bolsters the building blocks of religious identity outlined by Mol, and amongst a group it fosters "cognitive uniformity" (30) against the dissonance that comes from a world view that conflicts with general social norms. In other words, one can construct a picture of the world, and engage

with a group that shares this picture, in order to sustain one's beliefs - even in the face of contrary evidence from the rest of the world.

In many ways, identity is intrinsically bound up with beliefs. And as beliefs and ideas have many different sources, so too personal identity will have been built upon different origins: parental influence, friendships, the media, religion, science. For a Muslim, personal identity and religious identity will be intimately related; to be a practicing Muslim means placing Islam at the top of one's hierarchy of beliefs. But given the environment in which a third generation Muslim in Britain is growing up, a...

"set of beliefs coming from such varied sources almost certainly contains inconsistencies. Both our beliefs about what the world is like, and our set of values, are likely to include contradictions. As discussion reveals these inconsistencies, anyone sufficiently rational to be disturbed by them will have choices to make" (31).

Translated into the situation on the ground, many young Muslims have to make decisions about where Islam fits into their picture of the world - a world coloured by the picture presented by the school on the one hand, and parents on the other - and *how* to act in accordance with the outcome of their decision-making process.

At this point, it is worth mentioning the cognitive dissonance theory associated with the scholar Leon Festinger (32). His ideas are useful in this study since he provides a model for suggesting how someone can sustain their beliefs when the reflections of reality from the wider society around them conflict with their views. In some senses, Muslims in Britain are in just such a situation, though no doubt Festinger did not have such a group of people, or their possible 'cognitive dissonance' in mind when he wrote his book. One of the central tenets of his theory is that if someone believes in something strongly enough, no matter how much concrete evidence is presented to falsify his or her belief, the likely result is that the belief will be held to with even greater tenacity (33). If a group is involved, their missionary zeal is likely to increase, especially if the individuals have committed themselves to a binding loyalty not just to the group, but

also to specific beliefs (34). The nature of the belief is an important part of the theory: it must be one that relates to real life situations for which evidence is available. An example would be a belief that the world is to be consumed by a catastrophe on a certain date, only to find that it did not occur as predicted. The beliefs of Muslims are certainly of a different kind, but some of the dynamics of cognitive dissonance theory have some bearing on their situation. They hold to beliefs not shared by many of those in the society around them or in the ethos of social life in general. Like those in small cult movements who make predictions of impending disaster, there are Muslim groups who spell out a forecast of increasing moral decadence, decline, and doom, the salvation from which can only come from heeding their warnings.

For Muslims, or indeed perhaps any practicing member of a religious community, dissonance is likely to be an everyday reality. Bruce Malina suggests that "some degree of normative inconsistency is a feature of much of everyday life and religious consciousness. It is the fundamentalist who seeks to reduce this dissonance by insisting upon an unambiguous doctrinal or ethical perspective" (35). It is a way of drawing a boundary around one's identity, individually and as a group. Among a particular group of Muslim youth this appears especially evident. Many Muslims at university in Britain are involved with an Islamic society of some kind, many of which are increasingly showing fundamentalist trends. For example, the *Hizb ut Tahrir* group has made an impact sufficient to warrant a report in the *Times Higher Education Supplement* (36). Active on a number of student campuses, the group is known for its anti-Semitic tendencies, and attacks upon 'Establishment' organizations in Britain (37). Its popularity appears to rest upon those young Muslims who "want to break out of the 'clan' politics of their elders. The radical Islamic groups are attractive because they provide the young with an identity with which they can identify" (38). It is clear that the fundamentalist 'option' has been one response of some young Muslims towards dealing with the dissonance of ideological plurality in the West.

Some have argued that in pluralist societies, the religious organizations of minority groups are themselves part of the wider process of secularization (39). It should come as no surprise that Bryan Wilson, who has largely maintained his theory of secularization despite the growth of religious revivalist movements, should be one such scholar. He suggests that religious centres function to support the identity of the community, serving social rather than religious needs (40). In some sense this may be true, especially perhaps for early migrants, but for subsequent generations of young Muslims in Britain, mosques are primarily religious institutions where the social function is secondary. There are now many non-religious centres where social needs may be met, such as youth clubs or cultural organizations. But in very recent years, some of these diverse functions are combining into 'community centres' where there are new facilities for young people and women (individuals who were perhaps previously uncatered for), offering space for prayers as well as leisure interests (41). Wilson's thesis does not stand true for Muslims in Britain whose religious activity has centred around mosques which have primarily catered for prayer requirements.

To conclude this section and begin the next, it is worth quoting again from Hans Mol...

"If, at the end of the twentieth century, the traditional religious categories of the Judeo-Christian heritage seem to be less successful in providing the major platform of identity construction, it may be because they have to share this function with numerous other foci of identity that have emerged in the wake of the unprecedented success of the forces of differentiation, rationality, individualism, which make may the undisputed master and manipulator of his physical environment" (42).

But for those young Muslims who share in the inheritance of the Judeo-Christian tradition, there are some forces working against them which make them much less than 'masters and manipulators of their environments' as racial and religious minorities in Britain.

4.3. Minority Status and Racism: their impact on Religious Identity in relation to Young British Muslims

Unlike their predecessors, the young generation today are less likely to accept racial harassment. A number of initiatives have evolved over the past thirty years as a way of countering racism. Groups such as the 'Guardian Asians' (43) is one example. Muhammad Anwar writes...

"Their immigrant parents might have accepted racial discrimination as the price to be paid for economic opportunities in Britain, but Muslim young people will not. Where there are racial attacks young Muslim people now hit back, as several recent incidents have shown (44).

Anwar cites examples, particularly in the era of the early days of the Rushdie affair. This would seem to suggest that in such cases, discrimination has a religious, as well as racial character. During the aftermath of the Rushdie affair, some Muslims in Britain with the surname 'Hussein' were targets of nuisance phone-calls and verbal abuse (45). One scholar has expressed it thus, "sometimes even a foreign name is enough to damn the person - many smaller companies want to keep to people from the same culture without a Paki (*sic*) in the middle" (46).

Simultaneously, Muslims have been campaigning for protection of their religious rights. Their religious identity has come to the fore as a more enduring and ultimate means for self-definition. Where Frederick Barth emphasized that ethnic *boundaries* defined a cultural group, rather than the content of their culture (47), there has been a shift in emphasis for young Muslims in Britain. Their cultural boundary is perhaps more symbolic, and less well-defined than for their parents. Expendable cultural values have been muted by some, and different features for identity-construction and maintenance emphasized. For example, some may have abandoned wearing *shalwar kameez* (an important symbol of identity for many first generation Pakistani Muslims), and instead have concentrated on increasing their knowledge of the sources of Islam. To them, content of identity is at least, if not more so important than contours.

"For a group which is defined as being both different and inferior and denied opportunities to assume identity and status relevant to the main stream of the

metropolitan society, self-conception and self-esteem may increasingly focus on religious belief and practices" (48).

One can only assume that the strength and absoluteness that comes from a religious identity is being used by youth who wish to offset this against the relativity and temporality of cultural identities. "Religious identity may sometimes have a stronger basis than mere ethnic identity mainly because of its claim to sacredness" (49).

In his article *Ingrained Racism Brings Muslim Youth back to Islam* (50), the director of London's Muslim college, Dr. Zaki Badawi suggests that racism might in some ways be considered positively. Since many young Muslims find it hard, if not impossible to be accepted by mainstream society, their resultant marginality prevents them from accommodating to 'mainstream' values. He suggests that while at school, many young Muslims do identify with the wider society mores due to the influence of their peers and atmosphere in the school. But it is when they try to become a part of the workforce that they find racism poses barriers to their acceptance. Badawi writes..."that's when they start to identify more closely with Islam" (51). In some ways then, it would appear that racism seems to strengthen religious identity, rather than weaken it.

Modern life itself imposes minority status on everyone to some extent, simply due to the multiplicity of identifications that come from family, work groups, ethnic coteries, leisure interests, and so on. However, in the case of Muslims in Britain, more of their identity will come about from associations from outside 'mainstream' society, i.e., from religious and cultural groups.

Members of the *majority* community generally receive positive affirmation of their history and cultural identity. Majority identity has a validity of its own, and does not rely on special efforts to maintain it. In contrast, members of minority groups are usually engaged in particular arrangements that meet their needs as a religious or cultural group.

"If minority members display a positive attitude towards their own group and a reluctance to dissociate themselves from it, they express a need for cultural affirmation and

a desire for its fulfillment. If, on the other hand, the minority identity only implies feelings of uncertainty and inferiority, this may be manifested in a desire to conceal one's group membership from outgroup members and in a desire to avoid identification with ingroup members. The desire for cultural affirmation means that the minority is, as a group, looking for its place within the social organizations of the society" (52).

The young generation of Muslims in Britain appear to be more assertive of their identity than their parents. Rather than as simply a private matter within their own communities, some youth are attempting to bring their 'Muslimness' into daily life in the wider society. Compared to their parents, it would seem that young people have a different perception of the 'majority' community, and therefore a different way of relating to it. They have become a part of it through the school system, and are less willing to retreat back into ghettoized communities for the other dimensions of their lives. They struggle to find acceptance.

Minority status emphasizes an individual's distinctive identity *vis-a-vis* the wider society. Combined with the individualism of the West, the dynamic between group-based identity and personal identity is changing to reflect a greater weight upon the latter. Furthermore young people, though influenced by mainstream culture and values, are perhaps less inclined to use majority yardsticks to measure their self-worth.

"Many previous empirical studies on minority identity have revealed an unjustified assumption about minority dependence on, and conformity to, the ongoing majority definitions. The studies in this volume make it quite clear that there is no general validity in the proposition that discriminatory views about one's group result in self-devaluation" (53).

This conclusion may go some way towards explaining the apparent self-confidence in their religious identity on the part of some young Muslims.

The minority situation is often one of marginality. This was mentioned in an earlier chapter (54), and some of the dynamics of identity associated with it were cited. Hans Mol suggests that

individuals who are in some senses marginal are in a good position for objectively assessing their situation, standing as it were between 'the natives' and his or her own group. He writes...

"the stranger questions what is unquestionable to the in-group. He examines what is self-explanatory to the natives. His objectivity is the direct result of the failure of his previous rules of guidance and his loss of status, all of which compel him to re-think instead of 'thinking-as-usual' (55).

Mol is perhaps too sweeping in his assessment that 'previous rules of guidance' were a 'failure'. It is simply rather a case that some norms of behaviour are no longer suitable in a new environment, particularly one characterized by a group's minority status. Here it is possible to identify some of the forces behind the questioning of some young Muslims in Britain of their relationship to the past, present, and future. It is the process that may go some way towards answering for them the WHAT, WHY and HOW of their struggle for identity.

The ultimately peripheral issues that occupy the minds of first, and to some extent second generation Muslims in Britain, often contrasts strongly with the concerns of youth. The awareness of being in a minority has affected religious identity in different ways across the generations. For the early migrants, linguistic barriers were one factor which kept them within tight-knit communities, opposed to anything but the most minimal contact with outsiders, including other Muslims. The younger generation have realized the weakness that comes with internal division within the community, and many have rejected sectarianism and rigid ethnic division.

"Those who oppose amalgamations with other denominations seem to be more in need of concrete, discernable boundaries between us and not-us. On the other hand, the identity of those who favour mergers appears to be structured around more abstract ethics and beliefs" (56).

The young generation of Muslims have realized that they are part of a world wide *ummah* as they mix with Muslims of all backgrounds in Britain (often unlike their parents), and that a certain strength

comes with unity. As a consequence, they have focussed on some of the hard-hitting central issues that face all Muslims in a minority situation. Their unity is possible as a result of their recognition that they share belief fundamental ultimate ethical and spiritual truths. The 'Q' News 'Mind Body & Soul Project' has discussed such things as 'Is there a British Muslim Identity in the 21st Century?'. (57) The future surely lies in the outcome of such debate: young people are not only important as the successors for the future, but they are also an important "cultural phenomenon" (58). They are "new Europeans searching for a new belongingness and the right to new identities" (59).

But by virtue of their religious and often different ethnic background, there stand before young Muslims barriers in their search for this new identity. Their minority status can have a limiting and detrimental effect on the opportunities, and securement of social identity open to them. While some react to racism by asserting their culture even more strongly, others give way to the suggestion that their backgrounds are somehow inferior to 'mainstream norms'. Those concerned to protect and defend their cultural inheritance are likely to resort to collective group action for support and maintenance of their stance, and thus the identity that goes with it. For many young Muslims in Britain, action has centred around generational issues (60); they have been keen to initiate local youth groups in which their particular needs can be met. They are in the particular 'third generation' situation, and this begs the question of *how* to be British Muslims given the surroundings in which they live. Confident answers to such questions are more likely to arise from the interaction of those within their own generation who share this experience.

This dilemma has been well-explored by Will Herberg in his *Protestant, Catholic, Jew* (61). The grandson's and granddaughters of the first immigrants had managed to shake off some of the 'foreignness' that characterized the earlier generations: for example, their language was the same as their peers in the wider society, and many had been born in America. But even for this new generation, there remained the questions of belonging and self-identity.

"They were Americans, but what *kind* of Americans? They desired a sense of identity that would explain why they were different from 'One Man's Family'. They wished to belong to a group. The old-line ethnic group, with its foreign language and culture was not for them; they were Americans. But the old family religion, the old ethnic religion, could serve where language and culture could not" (62).

Herberg's 'third generation' were Christian, and their return to religion was to a very 'American' Christianity, where English was the medium for worship. This move away from the religious styles of their forefathers towards more contemporary American expressions was a way of keeping a link with the past, and yet feeling a sense of belonging to their present situation. Though the third generation of Muslims in Britain are of a different religious background to the majority, they still demonstrate some of the tendencies of Herberg's observations. "Religious associations now became the primary context of self-identification and social location for the third generation" (63), and thus a way of reconciling their minority background and position with their location, and more fundamentally, their wish to partake of the opportunities of the wider society. Religion can be used as a way of legitimating their identity as *British Muslims* who have as much right as anyone else to contribute to the life of the country. Race has become a secondary means of self-identification for the youngsters themselves, though their visible racial difference means that others may still think of them in those terms; hence the struggle on the part of many young Muslims to assert their religious identity over and above their racial one. Clearly though, this has not meant that all young Muslims have taken up religious practices; many may be simply using religion as a way of identifying and locating themselves in this country and no more.

"...the third generation, coming into its own with the cessation of mass immigration, tried to recover its 'heritage' so as to vie itself some sort of 'name' or context of self-identification and social location in the larger society. 'What the son wishes to forget the grandson wishes to remember. But what he can remember is obviously not his grandfathers foreign culture; it is rather his grandfathers *religion* - America does not demand of him the abandonment of the ancestral religion as it does of the ancestral language and culture. This religion he now 'remembers' in a form suitably

'Americanized' and yet in a curious way also 're-traditionalized'. Within this comprehensive framework of basic sociological change operate those inner factors making for a 'return to religion' which so many observers have noted in recent years - the collapse of all secular securities in the historical crisis of our time, the quest for a recovery of meaning in life, the new search for inwardness and personal authenticity amid the collectivistic heteronomies of the present-day world" (64).

While there is still some evidence of traditional cultural practices and norms among Muslim families in Britain, Herberg's observations are beginning to show some poignancy among some third generation Muslims; these are perhaps the individual who are at the spearhead of future development.

As time goes by, less and less contact is likely with the country of origin, whether in terms of return for burial, marriage partners, or financial ties. The younger generation of British Muslims no longer construct their identity based on perceptions of the outside world as a 'frightening threat', unlike some of their predecessors. Despite their minority position, many are keen to partake of life outside of their immediate communities. Those who are successful build the self-confidence of others. They are one's with a religious identity strong enough to withstand prejudice and challenge; they will have worked out the teachings of Islam in relation to its Western setting, and will have successfully established which aspects of the law they must focus upon for self-protection. Before this becomes evident, a great deal of self-development needs to take place within the community.

The hostility of the mainstream society, militates against feelings of belonging for young Muslims. Overcoming this is one of the processes that will lead to future community development. Inferiority complexes are perhaps a part of insecure minority group identity; but as the talents and resources of the community develop, this will lessen.

As a minority group, young Muslims face a division between the national identity of their parents, and that of the wider society. They are neither fully committed to Britain and its way of life, nor

are they completely absorbed by their parents country of origin. Religious identity provides a way out of this identificational *impasse*, offering as it does a secure foundation based on religion that answers many of their questions and dilemmas. This must also be set against the increase in racism across the Western world.

"To some extent, Muslim identity is made central for Muslim communities by the distinctive anti-Islamic racism currently prevalent in Britain and Europe. Thus Muslim unity and mobilization is a necessary and legitimate strategy" (65).

Anwar suggests (66) that the change in religious understanding, practice and experience on the part of young Muslims in Britain is quite in accordance with social theories that suggest that such facets of religion usually change when pressurized by exposure to different cultures and beliefs. Furthermore, the Muslim presence in Europe is now particularly evident through the media. Events happening to Bosnian Muslims especially have prompted many young people to consider where their loyalties lie: but combined with the Rushdie affair and the Gulf War, they are now "questioning the double standards of the West and as a reaction are becoming 'good Muslims'" (67).

The word 'reaction' captures some of the attempts made by young Muslims to find a way of being British Muslims, especially where they feel religious identity is under threat. The subject of *hijab* was the focus of a recent article in *The Independent* (68). The increasing practice of veiling for some East London women seems to be about much more than observance of Islamic custom: there is no doubt that it is part of a growing religious awareness, but it seems to also to be a reaction against the wider society, especially racism.

"...racist attacks have increased dramatically...and tension has grown following the British National Party's success in local elections last year. But far from fearful of standing out as targets of violence, many of the devout Muslim girls regard the *hijab* as a gesture of defiance. The Islamic groups have been quick to take action in the anti-racist struggle, offering not only self-defence classes but also a new and powerful sense of identity to members" (69).

Combined with a new religious awareness, young Muslims have appear to have taken a fresh look at many aspects of their lives. *The Independent* report suggested that many are still in favour of arranged marriages, not through parental connections, but rather through their peer friendships. In fact, they are critical of the 'cultural Islam' practiced by their parents.

"A new Muslim identity is being forged among the young female members of Britain's Islamic community, whether imposed or enthusiastically embraced. In the East End, teenagers with Turkish, Bengali and Middle Eastern backgrounds form a generation of Muslims whose religious approach differs from the traditional practices of their parents. They find their parents too immersed in cultural traditions and detached from the global Islamic community. The parents are often ignorant of Islamic doctrine, whereas these young Muslims analyse the Koran (sic), attend discussions on religious topics and dream of the ideal Islamic state" (70)

Under the pressure of being a minority group in society at large, the new generation of Muslims have benefited from an awareness that they are part of a worldwide *ummah*. Uniting with other members of their faith, but perhaps of a different ethnic background, has proved itself as a way of strengthening identity for all concerned. It would seem that some young Muslims have perceived that there is more to gain by identifying more with their own age group, than with their own ethnic and parental background when it comes to living as the future generation of Muslims in Britain.

At this stage it seems possible to outline some broad categories which characterize the identity responses of different young Muslims to their situation as a minority group in Britain.

a) an exclusivist identity typifies the individual who does everything possible to assert his or her distinctive identity regardless of opposition or disadvantage. The sense of being a Muslim will be highly protected, and in no sense will it be compromisable. This identity is perhaps currently applicable to a minority of young Muslims in Britain, though the numbers who show such tendencies appear to be growing.

b) borderline identity points to the individual whose identity is ambiguous and who stands on the edge of a number of different and unrelated groups. The identity presented to others is situationally dependent, and pragmatism generally determines which 'face' to show to others...the one most likely to be advantageous and acceptable. There is confusion and uncertainty regarding many decisions, and there may be a sense of frustration at the inconsistencies and the apparent ease of alternating between being one kind of individual in one situation and another at a different time or place. The generally unsure and insecure identity perhaps typifies many young Muslims in their struggle between ideals and realities.

c) another way of conceptualizing a category of young Muslims is those who have in many ways assimilated with the majority community. They disassociate from their ethnic group with as much force as they try to associate with the host community, regardless of the advantages and opportunities that may be sacrificed in the process. Such a category appears to represent a very small group of Muslims in Britain.

Given that identity-construction and maintenance is a dynamic and on-going process in the life of an individual, the boundaries between these different groups are not rigid or mutually exclusive over the life-history of a person.

4.4. Conclusion

Many young Muslims in Britain are now *au fait* with life in a social situation that is in many ways alien to their grandparents' generation. With the upheaval of migration now some two and three decades past, the young are exploring the context in which they find themselves, trying to find their place within it. Numerous forces exert themselves upon them; some originate from the wider society, while others come from within the communities to which they belong. In some sense, the third generation are a buffer between two potentially conflicting ways of seeing the world. One is shaped by modernity and the ideologies that accompany it; the other is the legacy of countless generations of tradition.

The Muslim community in Britain over the course of its history has tried to preserve the identity of its members through the maintenance and construction of various institutions. The creation of mosques, community centres, publishing ventures, to name a few, are means whereby the religious dimension of life may be retained and promoted. These institutions are in some way a necessary response to the secularizing and liberal forces which surround the community. The following chapter will explore some of these facilities and organizations. Their efficacy in maintaining religious identity will be considered, particularly with the future of the community in mind.

Notes to Chapter Four

(1) Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, Oxford: Polity Press, 1991, p48.

(2) *ibid.*, p5.

(3) P. Rack, *Race, Culture and Mental Disorder*, London: Tavistock, 1982, p155.

(4) J. Glover., *I: The Philosophy and Psychology of Personal Identity*, Penguin, 1988, p155.

(5) R. Sharif, *Young Muslim Women of Pakistani Origin*, M.A. thesis, University of Birmingham, 1985, p117.

(6) *ibid.*, p110.

(7) Meredith McGuire, *Religion: The Social Context*, Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1987, p33.

(8) Peter Berger, *The Social Reality of Religion*, Faber & Faber, 1969, p107.

(9) *ibid.*, p.48.

(10) *ibid.*, p150.

(11) see Appendix Two, p322

(12) Christopher Lamb, *Belief in a Mixed Society*, Lion Publishing plc., 1985, p26.

(13) Muhammad Raza, *Islam in Britain*, Leicester, Volcano Press, 1991, p75.

(14) Shabbir Akhtar, *A Faith for all Seasons*, London: Bellew, 1990, p7-9.

(15) Hasan Askari, *Spiritual Quest: An Inter-religious Dimension*, Leeds, Severn Mirrors Publishing Co., 1991, p6.

(16) Hans Mol, *Identity and the Sacred*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1976, p91.

(17) Andrew Rippin, *Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices, Volume 2: The Contemporary Period*, London: Routledge, 1993, p117.

(18) *ibid.*, p128.

(19) R.A. Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition*, London: Heinemann, 1967, p305.

(20) Jorgen Nielsen, *Muslims in Britain: Searching for an Identity*, in *New Community*, Spring 1987, vol.13.3, p392.

(21) Raymond Cochrane & Mary Stopes-Roe, *Citizens of this Country: The Asian British*, Clevedon: Philadelphia, Multilingual Matters, 1990, p76.

(22) see page 59.

(23) Hans Mol, op. cit., p78.

(24) Muhammad Anwar, *Young Muslims in Britain: Attitudes, Educational Needs and Policy Implications*, Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1994, p25.

(25) Erik Erikson, The Concept of Identity in Race Relations, in *Daedalus*, vol.95, p145-171, 1966.

(26) Ernest Gellner, *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion*, London: Routledge, 1992, p3.

(27) ibid.

(28) ibid., p74.

(29) Robin Gill, *Competing Convictions*, S.C.M., 1989, p23.

(30) ibid., p35.

(31) Jonathan Glover, *I; The Philosophy and Psychology of Personal Identity*, Penguin, 1988, p162.

(32) Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*, Tavistock Publications, 1957.

(33) Leon Festinger, *When Prophecy Fails*, New York: Harper & Row, 1956, p3.

(34) ibid., p4.

(35) Bruce Malina, cited in Robin Gill, op. cit., p50.

(36) *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 20/2/94.

(37) *British Muslims Monthly Survey*, Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, Birmingham, vol.2.2, February 1994.

(38) *British Muslims Monthly Survey*, op. cit., vol.2.1, January 1994.

(39) such as Bryan Wilson, in *Religion in Secular Society*, London: Watts, 1966, or Will Herberg, *Protestant Catholic Jew*, New York: Anchor Books, 1960,

(40) Bryan Wilson, op. cit., p100-1; p115; p93.

(41) see for example, *British Muslims Monthly Survey*, op. cit., vol.1.12, December 1993, or vol. 1.11, November 1993, (mosque reports).

(42) Hans Mol, op. cit., p43.

(43) report in *The Independent*, 30/3/94.

(44) Muhammad Anwar, *Muslims in Britain: Some Recent Developments*, Berlin, Berliner Institut Fur Vergleichende Sozialforschung, 1991, p20.

(45) Report of an interviewee in my Community Project, Leicester, 1992 (unpublished).

(46) Zaki Badawi, Ingrained Racism brings Muslim Youth back to Islam, in *New Horizon*, (London), April-May 1988, p25.

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(48) Rohit Barot (ed), *Religion and Ethnicity: Minorities and Social Change in the Metropolis*, The Netherlands: Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1993, p8.

(49) John Rex, Religion and Ethnicity in the Metropolis, *ibid.*, p19.

(50) Zaki Badawi, *ibid.*

(51) *ibid.*

(52) Karmela Liebkind, *Minority Identity and Identification Processes: a social psychological study*, Commentationes Scientiarum Socialium 22, 1984, Helsinki, p40.

(53) Karmela Liebkind (ed), *New Identities in Europe: Immigrant Ancestry and the Ethnic Identity of Youth*, Gower Publishing Co., 1989, p237.

(54) see page 23.

(55) Hans Mol, *op. cit.*, p34.

(56) *ibid.*, p88.

(57) see for example 'Q' News, vol.2.3 & vol.2.4, April 1993.

(58) M. Manazir Ahsan (foreword) in Muhammad Anwar's, *Young Muslims in Britain: Attitudes, Educational Needs and Policy Implications*, Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1994, p6.

(59) Czarina Wilpert, Ethnic and Cultural Identity: Ethnicity and the Second Generation in the Context of European Migration, in Karmela Liebkind (ed), *New Identities in Europe*, Gower Publishing Co., 1989, p6.

(60) The 'Q' News 'Mind, Body Soul Projects' is essentially orientated at young Muslims. Those under twenty-one were invited to the first open meeting.

(61) Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew*, Anchor Books, 1960.

(62) *ibid.*, p31.

(63) *ibid.*

(64) *ibid.*, p257.

(65) Charles Husband and Waqar I. Ahmad, Religious Identity, Citizenship, and Welfare: The case of Muslims in Britain, in *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, 1993, vol.10.2

(66) Muhammad Anwar, *op. cit.*, p39.

(67) *ibid.*, p33.

(68) Asla Aydintasbas in *The Independent*, 28/4/94.

(69) *ibid.*

(70) *ibid.*

CHAPTER FIVE

Chapter Five - Religious Identity within the Muslim Community

Having suggested that religious identity appears to be coming to the fore in the lives and identifications of many young Muslims, it is important to consider the possible support systems that have been created by the Muslim community to nurture this identity. The reality of the Muslim world "depends upon the presence of social structures with which this (religious) reality is taken for granted and within which successive generations of individuals are socialized in such a way that this world will be real *to them*" (1). As a way of building a social world for the construction and maintenance of identity, the Muslim community in Britain has established numerous organizations and institutions. These supply the worldview to support an Islamic picture of reality, and as such they offset the influences of the wider society and its secular, liberal and materialist ideologies. Though the history of Islam in Britain on any large scale is relatively recent, the community has been active in providing facilities to meet different needs. Since prayer forms the core of daily Islamic practice, mosques were the initial starting point for community development and identity. While mosque building still continues apace, numerous other interests have been developed. Some of these initiatives will now be considered to see how they serve the Muslims in Britain, especially where they provide a mechanism for identity maintenance.

5.1. Identity-Forming Institutions

5.1.1. The Family

It is within the confines of the home that newly-born Muslim children will primarily be exposed to Islamic beliefs and practices. As such, their nurturing into the faith constitutes a means for the religious identity of the community to be preserved through the rearing of a new generation. The family plays a critical role as an instrument of religious identity construction. It is in this environment that beliefs and practices will be taught, engendering over time a commitment to the traditions of the faith. The family also serves as a identity support-system for all its members, regardless of age. Studying the

faith together, as well as the Islamic ethos that determines relationships and activities will act for a family that is a part of a minority community as an important counterbalancing force to the wider society.

The future of the Muslim community depends on the establishment of new families; therefore, the system of arranging marriages - one way or another - must be organised. The growing number of 'Asian' marriage agencies catering to the specific needs of different faith/ethnic groups would seem to indicate that young members of ethnic minority communities are firstly having trouble finding partners, and secondly, that they are keen to marry within their own communities (2). What does this suggest about identity?

It would seem that a number of young Muslims (and those of other minority faith communities) have recognised their religious identity - perhaps only subconsciously - by wishing to marry a partner who will support and share it. While a number of Asian men may freely date English girls, when it comes to marriage their religion and traditions cannot be discounted. But the Muslim community is at a critical stage of transition with regard to arranged marriages at this point of its history. Traditional methods of bringing partners together have not been completely abandoned, nor have young people themselves taken complete responsibility for their weddings. Some kind of compromise has emerged..."Parents who have more confidence in the maturity of their children than in their own judgment in a rapidly changing world may well feel relieved of a major responsibility if they can work according to the preferences of their children while preserving the formality of parental choice" (3).

As the central institution of Islam, the family also must relate to the mosque - another important institution for the preservation of identity. They play complementary roles. Therefore, after the family home, the mosque is a kind of second home for many Muslim families, especially the menfolk and children. The sermons (*khutbah*) of the imam will in turn reinforce the importance of the family...

"he exhorts the congregation to ensure that children are brought up in the way of Islam, learning in the home the

rudiments of formal religious observance and the etiquette of a Muslim household. One dramatically declared that when the children are accused on the Day of Judgement of being bad Muslims, they will turn to God and ask him to ask their parents if they ever taught them Islam..." (4).

Within the confines of the home the basic values and beliefs of Islam will be transmitted from parents to children in an on-going process of education. The mosque serves to support what will have begun in the family home. The importance of the family structure for the conferring of identity was recognised, if subconsciously, by first generation migrants to Britain. Once women and children were settled in Britain, local communities tried as far as possible to recreate in this country the social systems they had left behind. Children grew up at home as an integral part of a system of social relationships which formed a cohesive and structured network; within such an environment, identity could be forged.

"The integrity of family and community life is of overwhelming importance. Even if the religious claims of Islam are not felt particularly to be clear or stringent, they are present as part of the background" (5).

5.1.2. Mosques

The first mosque in Britain came into being at the end of the last century in Woking. From a small beginning, the Muslim community in Britain now boasts approximately one thousand mosques (6). Many of these are converted terraced houses, though a number of impressive purpose built mosques/community centres now exist, especially in cities and large towns with a high Muslim population such as London, Bradford and Birmingham. Often these have been built with the backing of finances from the Gulf states.

Mosques have begun to take on many other roles besides offering prayer facilities. Many now have the function of community centres. However, things are not always so simple. Especially over the last five years or so, a number of mosques have been at the centre of local and national media attention due to leadership and financial disputes. Such is the tension for some communities that at times these disturbances become violent and a police presence brings

notoriety to some Muslim centres. The long-running political turbulence at Luton mosque which erupted in violence in March 1994 is one recent example (7). Mohammad Raza notes the controversy that has surrounded some mosques in the last few years by quoting the newsletter of ~~the~~ Islamic Cultural Centre in London...

"mosques in Britain have become a battle ground for power politics...It is pointless to conceal that within the last few years most of the trouble and discord have stemmed from the attitudes of some of the Ulema and Imams and these have been the reason for many of the most unpleasant scenes witnessed" (8).

The in-fighting taking place in some mosques often has a sectarian character that emanates from Muslim community politics. It rarely has any relation to the wider society. And rather than serving local Muslims in their attempt to live as Muslims in Britain it instead wastes time, energy and resources that can be ill-afforded. More importantly it does little for the identity of the community...in the strengthening of religious identity for worshippers, or the perception of local Muslims by the surrounding community. Raza goes so far as to say..."such an attitude from the central institution of Islam not only shows a lack of understanding of Islam but also a lack of commitment to it" (9). Whether other Muslims would share this opinion is open to debate, but it seems reasonable to suggest that the squabbles taking place in some mosques illustrate the tensions of a minority community. Under the pressure that such a situation imposes, the whole politics of the Muslim world comes into play, though in microcosm. Disputes and sectarian differences that are spread out over a whole nation will appear much more intense and sharply focussed for a minority community in a non-Muslim polity.

Mosques play an important part in establishing the identity of a community in which there is a high Muslim population. But in establishing this community identity, the aspirations of Muslims often comes into conflict with the interests of local non-Muslims. The latter in some areas fear a 'Muslim invasion' into their neighbourhood, and the division of space becomes a political matter that sharpens differing identities. So too is the issue of the call to prayer, the *adhan*. The Islamization of the local airwaves often causes protest

from local non-Muslims while on the other hand, Muslims regard it as an important reminder of their links with the world-wide *ummah* and their religious identity within a locality in Britain. Muslims have looked to natural allies in their struggle to preserve community identity. John Eade notes in his paper on Islam in East London that a group of local Christian clerics came to the defence of the Muslims regarding the calling of the *adhan* (10). In itself this indicates that the religious identity of one faith community has implications and resonance for others by, amongst other things, opening up debate on the place of religion in a largely secular society. Questions are raised about what the implications and demands of a Muslim religious presence, symbolized by a mosque, *means* for the local community. In East London, "media attention strengthened a particular theme about community and identity while the disputes over the use of mosques brought into the public arena certain issues which secular representatives had, for a long time, been able to keep at bay" (11). The identity needs and demands of Muslims therefore extends well beyond the immediate vicinity.

The mosque often serves as the centre of community activities. Many mosques have a library/bookshop, facilities for a *madrassah*, and at times of communal tension or celebration, the mosque is the focal meeting point. More than this, throughout the year it functions in a way that the local parish may have done in years gone by: "the religious and moral rectitude of each individual man, woman and youth is overseen by the community" (12). Tight-knit neighbourhoods which find their mooring from the local *masjid* are reminded of their religious identity and their obligation towards the community to uphold this identity and the model of behaviour it demands.

The importance of mosques for *families* now appears to be evident to some communities. Daniele Joly notes in her paper on Islam in Birmingham that some mosque actively encourage all the members of the family to attend the mosque, and in one of them "Sunday has been transformed into a family religious occasion where men, women and children gather to pray, listen to sermons and partake of a collective meal" (13) though for this latter event the sexes are

separated. This seems to indicate a positive co-operation between the two fundamental institutions of Islam for the nurturing of identity, and points to a successful means of reinforcing identity within a non-Muslim society.

5.1.3. Schools and *Madrassahs*

Even in the early days of the community in Britain, there was concern on the part of many parents that their children should receive more formal religious instruction beyond that of the home environment. Mosques became the focus for these endeavours, with most doubling-up not just as places for prayer, but also as *madrassahs*. Here children would be taught the fundamentals of their faith and how to read the *Qur'an* in Arabic. In some *madrassahs*, they would also receive mother-tongue education. The urgency of these initiatives was not just for the moral and spiritual welfare of the child as a Muslim; it was also about the endowment of a religious identity and a recognition that the future of the community depended upon its successful establishment. Methods and techniques of teaching within mosque schools differ from simple rote-learning of the *Qur'an* to a more progressive form of education which attempts to teach children the meanings of the *Qur'an*, particularly with reference to their location in Britain. There is some disagreement on the timing of Islamic education for children...some argue that after a normal school day, children are too tired for further study. As a result, some mosques devote time at weekends to the education of children. But the whole issue of Islamic teaching has extended far beyond mosque communities; it is now a national matter as Muslims campaign for the right to Voluntary Aided schools. As an alternative to mosque schools, some Muslim community leaders have arranged for there to be Islamic teaching on school premises after normal school hours. The Muslim Education Trust has been especially associated with such endeavours (14).

During the early 1980's Bradford Muslims were playing a pioneering role in bringing educational issues to the forefront of debate. Concerns arising were principally related to such things as provision of *halal* meat, ethos of the schools, and language issues. Prior to

this time, the community had kept itself to itself. But then educational authorities were taken by surprise as a result of Muslim demands. The community was wanting to be recognised for its distinctiveness, and its true position of being a minority with a particular identity. The difficulties that arose for Muslim children in state schools - and especially for girls - (such as sex education classes, mixed gym and P.E. lessons, as well as some values promoted in the 'hidden curriculum') led to the establishment of a number of private schools in order to avoid the potentially undermining effect on religious identity that could come from the state education system. It is estimated that there now are some fifteen private Muslim schools in Britain, many of which have long waiting lists (15). So far, no research appears to have been done on the private Islamic schools in Britain.

Key motivating factors behind the drives for Islamic schools arise primarily from identity issues; through being educated in one normative cultural environment, then returning to a very different one at home, "children live in two conflicting systems of meaning and value, and thus cannot develop consistent guidelines for their conduct, or discover a coherent basis for knowing 'who they are'" (16). There is a discrepancy between the values of the home environment which stress cooperation and family unity, versus the individualism and competitive ethos of the British school system. "The former is fundamentally religious, even if the doctrines are not always clearly understood; the latter is secular, even while acknowledging the existence of the phenomena of religion" (17). To offset this potentially damaging effect on religious identity, the role of Islamic schools is regarded as of paramount importance for the successful future development of the community.

Another factor behind campaigns for Islamic schools arises due to the pressures of racism that exist in some multi-racial areas. "Right from the start of schooling, an Asian child in the North of England has to face being called such names as 'Paki' or 'Chapatti-face', or being subjected to a string of insults borrowed straight from adult usage" (18). Where such abuse is beyond the level of normal childhood

teasing, a secure personal and religious identity is potentially damaged beyond repair.

There have been numerous initiatives from within the Muslim community to establish both private schools, as well as voluntary-aided schools. The currently private 'Islamia School' in Brent, London, became well-known in educational circles as a test case for government support of voluntary-aided Muslim schools; its high standards of schooling were well-documented, proving that publically funded Muslim schools could be as workable as Christian and Jewish schools. The failure of its initiatives to win government support means that the debate goes on, along with lengthy waiting lists for private alternatives.

Since the early days of the community, education has been high on the British Muslim agenda. In 1966 the Muslim Educational Trust became the first organizations whose sole interest has centred on matters of schooling. Likewise, other Muslim institutions, such as the Union of Muslim Organisations inaugurated a committee devoted to educational matters. At an individual level, certain prominent Muslims have become associated with the campaigns for Muslim education; Yusuf Islam and Ghulam Sarwar are two notable examples. But even within the Muslim community, opinion is divided on the merits of separate Islamic schools. On the one hand there are those that assert, "a need for the establishment of separate Islamic schools, run and manned by the community to preserve Islamic identity and develop an integrated personality in the Muslim child" (19), against those who favour state education of Muslim children with mosque schools supplementing them. The debate will go on, no doubt with issues of identity forming the cornerstone of arguments.

5.1.4. Youth Organisations

Compared to the rest of the population, the Muslim community in Britain is overwhelmingly comprised of young people. It has been estimated by one Islamic researcher that "one third of the total Muslim population consists of children and one-fifth of youth. This means that there are around 700,000 children and over 400,000 Muslim

youth living in Britain (20). A number of organizations have been in existence to meet the particular interests of youth. Though focused primarily on Muslim students, the Federation of Students Islamic Societies (FOSIS) was formed in 1962 when representatives from different student Islamic groups decided to form a national body (21). Such co-operation meant that there could be nationwide collaboration on certain student needs, particularly the religious and social welfare interests of new students.

Moving away from primarily student interests, there are two further national youth groups which meet the religious and social needs of young Muslims. The Young Muslims U.K. (Y.M.'s) based at the Islamic Foundation in Leicester (founded in 1984) and the Young Muslim Organization UK in London, both organise nationwide activities such as study groups, summer camps, training programmes, and sporting pursuits. 'Young Muslims' is pioneering for the development of a British Muslim identity for its members. An inherent part of its work is shaking off the foreign cultural baggage in which enmeshes Islam, while at the same time developing the strategies for a British Islam. Y.M. is a development of the U.K. Islamic Mission, both of which have taken inspiration from the *Jamaat-i-Islami* ethos. Y.M. is also active in University student campuses in the form of Islamic societies.

Young people are also mobilizing themselves into groups amid their daily lives at colleges and schools. Those among them who are most confident of their religious identity are having a significant impact on their peers, especially women. Asla Aydintasbas writes from East London...

"Ten years ago, pressure on young Muslim women came mainly from their parents; today, however, demands for a stricter Islamic dress code come mainly from their peers...In the predominantly Muslim Tower Hamlets College, most girls decide to put on the *hijab* after coming into contact with members of (Islamic) societies. But a group member denied exerting pressure: 'there are activists who go round, sit with women and just talk about Islam. At the end of the day, its up to them...But the membership, now at 500 is growing and growing'" (22).

This denial must be offset against the reports of one Muslim female student who is reported as saying...

"a gang of boys has appeared outside the schools, lecturing (and) harassing Muslim girls who are not wearing the scarf, or *hijab*. They tell us that we show no respect for our parents by wearing these Western clothes and that we should all cover our heads in order to be true Muslims. While some boys are more coercive, telling girls that they would only be 'truly beautiful' under the scarf, others have gone further, accusing them of being 'slags' (23).

Such ardent proselytism amongst some young Muslims has perhaps become a way of offsetting threats to identity from the wider society - by trying to rally the support of those from within the Muslim community and by attempting to present a united front. The *hijab* has become a powerful symbol of this effort, and the more women who wear it, the more the community around them can be identified as specifically Muslim, rather than simply 'Asian'. But the identities that are being formed are not simply a reaction to discrimination from the wider society; such a conclusion would undervalue the importance of Islam as a religious way of life positively adopted by youth.

Radical youth groups are proving popular with some young Muslims, and their popularity turns around one word...identity. A Birmingham-based psychiatrist observes that organizations such as Hizb ut Tahrir have appeal because of the identity they provide. "Instead of rituals which they can learn at the mosque, the radical groups function as clubs, providing support, friendship. They give them an identity which British society hasn't" (24). Not only is "British society" to blame; it is as much a reflection of the failing of 'British Muslim society' that disaffected youth form their own breakaway groups. It can in one sense be seen as a protest against the backwardness the still exists in some mosques: the future of *khutbahs* in Urdu looks bleak if demands by British Muslim youth are given cognizance.

5.1.5. Language

The Muslim community is currently composed of several different generations each of which bear, in general, variable relationships to

the English language on the one hand and their mother tongue on the other. Many first generation Pakistani Muslims will regard Urdu as their first language. So too will many from the second generation, though often they are fully competent in English. There are differences too between the sexes: men will generally be more fluent in English than women. As Haleh Afshar notes, for the women of the community in particular, "language with its rich literature and cultural connotations was a source of strength, identity and pride, which they valued and wished to preserve". She goes on to add, "but for the youngest generation, who had grown up in Britain and who used the English language as a matter of course there was a dilemma. They prefer to speak English" (25). If language is regarded as "the imposition of order upon experience" (26), the difference in language preferences across the generations reflects their variance of experience in Britain. For the first and second generation Muslims, use of their mother tongue is the naturally corollary of their identity as Pakistani Muslims originating from a particular district of their homeland. Many still *think* in relation to this identity, hence the importance for them of Urdu. Their language *embodies* this identity. As parents, many have wished to pass on this identity to their children via mother-tongue communication as a way of preserving religious and cultural identity for the future. Set against these efforts are the experiences of their children, whose experiences do not reflect the identity of their parents. For many, English has become the medium which embodies their experiences in this country, though of course many of the third generation have considerable understanding of their mother tongue, and in some situations are forced to maintain it, especially within the home (27).

It is surrounding language use that the differences of identity between the generations are perhaps best symbolized. The identity transmitted by family elders through the mother tongue (with all that it carries), versus the identity symbols of the wider society embodied through English, condenses within the experiences of third generation Muslims into the conflicting identity patterns presented to them.

"To a communalist, culture signifies group membership. It is an emblem of group solidarity, providing definitions

and symbols for maintaining the coherence and self-respect of a group *vis-a-vis* other groups. In these terms a common culture is the means whereby members of a community can construct a favorable account of themselves in relation to the rest of the world. Language is the medium of group consciousness, and literature the repository of communicable and partisan collective memories" (28).

Given the conflicts that arise between mother tongue usage in the home and that of English (usually) with peers and at school, many young Muslims regard English as an authentic and appropriate medium with which communicate their experiences. Hence many of the new publishing and media ventures within Britain's Muslim community are increasingly using this medium. Implicitly however, a competence in Arabic is encouraged, being as it is *the* language of Islam. There remain no shortage of teaching materials to enable English speaking Muslims to learn Qur'anic Arabic, embodying as it does the worldview of Islam and essential building blocks for religious identity at a group and individual level.

5.1.6. Publishing Houses

During the relatively short history of Islam in Britain, there has been a gradual transition (still taking place) between literature published abroad and imported into Britain, as against British Muslim publishing enterprises. The Islamic Foundation in Leicester was one of the first institutions that made publication of Islamic books in English one of its priorities, though many of these were initially translations of works originating from abroad, and were essentially *da'wah* orientated. In the case of the Islamic Foundation, the writings of Maulana Maududi especially fit this category. But over its history the Foundation has broadened its scope with regard to publishing, and many of its books and Islamic materials reflect the concerns and interests of Islamic experience in Britain. Much of its publishing work has made little impact on the mainstream Muslim community in Britain (at least so-far), and it is non-Muslims with an interest in Islam who largely refer to its books (29). Part of the reason for this, especially in the early days, was the lack competence in English, particularly among early migrants.

'Ta-Ha' Publishing in London is largely associated with *da'wah* within the Muslim community, and general information on Islam for Muslims and non-Muslims. At an academic level, the 'Islamic Texts Society' in Cambridge has produced many scholarly works on Islam aimed at both a Muslim and non-Muslim audience. 'Volcano Press' in Leicester is a publishing outlet associated with the Muslim Community Studies Institute. It has produced a number of books and pamphlets on Islam in Britain, the Rushdie Affair, and social scientific study of Islam. Other publishing houses which are particularly associated with Muslims are 'Grey Seal', 'Zahra Trust' and 'Bellew Press'.

Though not strictly concerned with publishing, there are a number of *outlets* for Islamic books and *da'wah* materials, some of which are targeting a non-Muslim audience. The Islamic Propagation Centre International in Birmingham is one example, with many of its materials connected with the Muslim World League, and the evangelist Ahmed Deedat. Similarly the 'U.K. Islamic Mission Dawah Centre' in Birmingham supplies books, cassettes, and videos produced by Ahmed Deedat in particular.

The market is now flooded by numerous resources for young Muslims, with the quality being highly variable in many cases. Materials produced in this country are generally of a good standard, and well-attuned to the needs and development of the community. Those resources coming from abroad sometimes miss real needs. For example, the video tapes produced by Ahmed Deedat have been extremely popular amongst a wide variety of Muslims. But his style is one that often does little more than give a psychological boost to an insecure community in a religiously plural and minority situation; this can hamper the successful establishment of firm and confident identity. Rhetoric is little substitute for a thorough examination of the Muslim minority position in Britain. The confidence and assurance that emanates from Deedat's style of preaching only shores up well-established beliefs, rather than moving forward into real areas of discussion that will throw light on the minority situation. More efforts need to be made to generate Muslim scholars from within the British Muslim community, rather than relying on materials coming from India or Pakistan which are basically adversarial against the

West. This does little to help the situation of Muslims living here, except exacerbate paranoia and mistrust of outsiders.

But even Muslims located in the West, particularly from among the elder generation, are producing polemical literature. This says much about their perception of their situation and the pluralism that surrounds them. They have not yet realized the strength they can draw from collaboration with other faiths, especially Christianity. Furthermore, by seeing Britain as a purely secular country makes it easier to conceptualize their situation here as a simple one: Islam versus *jahilia* (ignorance). Such a simplistic distinction no longer seems workable or realistic.

As a counterbalancing force to some of the irrelevant and polemical materials coming from abroad young Muslims in Britain have initiated a number of publishing ventures which reflect their specific interests. They are largely in the form of magazines and newspapers. Their contribution as a resource for religious identity maintenance deserves particular attention.

5.1.7. Muslim Media

Over the past decade, a number of British Muslim newspapers and magazines have come into existence. These are primarily targeting the younger generation. One of the most notable exceptions is '*The Muslim News*', a monthly eight page newspaper which reports on events throughout the Muslim world and the events within the British community. '*The Muslim News*' has been on the market for approximately five years; but its position as the sole British Muslim newspaper for most of this period was challenged just over two years ago with the emergence of a new publication known as '*Q News*'.

'*Q News*' is a weekly newspaper largely produced by a team of young Muslims. The style of reporting often reflects this, and it almost has the feel of a magazine rather than a newspaper: unlike *The Muslim News*, articles often focus exclusively on the British situation and the dilemmas and challenges that face the community. The 'Agony Uncle' column offered by Dr. Darsh answers the queries and questions that

may arise for a minority community. Interviews with prominent British (and sometimes international) Muslims provides a forum for accessing the thoughts and opinions of community leaders on a range of issues that affect the British community. By now, '*Q News*' has been in existence long enough for it to reflect many of the most significant events for Muslims that have taken place over the past three years.

The theme of religious identity often appears within the pages of '*Q News*', whether from its own reporters, or from interviewees. The newspaper sponsors an on-going 'Mind, Body and Soul Project' which is exclusively devoted to examining issues of identity for young Muslims. For example, the first meeting of this project in February 1993 was given the title, 'Beyond beards, scarves and halal meat: Is there a British Muslim identity in the 21st Century'? (30). The brief of the project was to attempt to go beyond the agendas set by the elder members of the community and to examine issues from a younger perspective. This included trying to rise above the internal racism within the community towards an appreciation of the rich ethnic and cultural diversity. Furthermore, it was the voice of young people themselves who wanted to examine the dilemmas of living one kind of life at home, and another outside the family environment; those who want to find "positive relevant role models" (31) for themselves, and "clear tangible and attainable roles within the community and society at large" (32). In a report after the gathering, Miriam Jilani wrote...

"When you are constantly reminded by your peers that you are different the chances are you go in one of two directions. Some feel they have to eradicate their 'difference'...if they ignore it so will everyone else. Only a few realize it isn't as simple as that. Others feel they have to explore that 'difference' and once they discover its true nature, they embrace it to suffocation. Only some find a balance between the two" (33).

An attempt to find this balance was the implicit undercurrent of the conference. For a newspaper such as '*Q News*' to have chosen to sponsor such a project where identity is a key issue, reflects in some respects the similar concern of young Muslims with this matter at a wider level. Furthermore, the newspaper will play some part in

helping to contribute to the debate on identity among those who read it. In some respects, '*Q News*' is working towards an understanding of the differences between the central tenets of Islam, and the cultural/national customs in which it has been brought to Britain by the first generation. In focussing on issues related to the mode of 'being a Muslim *in Britain*', some of the core aspects of Islam are given a fresh understanding, and a new form of cultural expression (34).

5.1.8. Retail Industry

During the past twenty years, a number of Islamic bookshops and outlets for Muslim resources have been developed. In communities with a high Muslim population it is now common to find at least one shop serving the needs of local Muslims. Where a community is sizeable it can support a number of different shops, some supplying books (especially the *Qur'an*), prayer mats etc., and others catering for dietary needs. Bookshops in particular can become the focus for discussions among Muslims and non-Muslims, provide a facility for Qur'anic study, and offer a centre for exchange of community activity and news. Furthermore, such outlets provide a symbolic landmark for the local Muslim community. The use of a particular spatial area for solely Islamic concerns reinforces the identity of the neighbourhood, along with the other shops that serve Muslim interests, such as *halal* butchers. To 'Islamize' a certain part of a community in a physical manner can in some way offset feelings of marginality.

5.1.9. Women's groups

The provision of facilities for Muslim women in Britain to pray and study the Qur'an together has a notoriously bad history. Few mosques even today have adequate space for the women of the community to meet together...even for prayer or Islamic study, let alone social gatherings. One of the results of this has been that women for a long time have been the silent half of the community. The importance of their education, given their role as the teachers of their children, has for a long time been overlooked and ignored. The

limitation this will have for the future has recently been recognised in some circles, both by men and women themselves. In his book *Islam in Britain*, Mohammad Raza urges...

"no amount of Islamic education which does not inculcate Islamic values from the home and which is realizable in the mosque as the community centre will ever take root. The home, the mosque, the Muslim community are the media through which Islamic education can be inculcated in Muslim women" (35).

Combined with this recognition of the importance of mosque access for women, a number of specifically women's organizations have been established to meet the particular concerns of the female half of the community. Women face a struggle in breaking the monopoly of men on religious understanding, standing up for the rights Islam has given them, and breaking out of the strangleholds of limiting cultural practices. In the course of this struggle, welfare needs have been paramount, making organizations such as the 'Muslim Women's Helpline' invaluable.

Along similar lines, the An-Nisa Society founded in 1985 by a group of young Muslim women has played an active part in community work among women. More recently, its scope has broadened with the launch of a 'Society Resource Centre' which has the aim of providing practical help for women and families in crisis, careers information, and advice on many aspects of housing, welfare and legal advice. Another important dimension of the Society's work is fostering relations between Muslim and non-Muslim women.

5.1.10. Ideational Institutions

a) Islamic Party of Great Britain

Formed at the end of the 1980's, the agenda of the Islamic Party of Great Britain is essentially orientated towards entry into the mainstream political process. The Rushdie affair was the catalyst for its formation, but predictably it has had little electoral success.

"It has not won seats on local councils, has only two candidates so far in place for the general election, and

has a falling membership. It claims to represent all Muslim interests, but has failed to attract the first generation of Muslim immigrants" (36).

It has been popular with some converts to Islam, with Yusuf Islam, (previously a pop singer known as 'Cat Stevens') as the most notable.

b) The Islamic Parliament of Great Britain

In a blaze of media publicity, the Muslim Parliament of Great Britain was inaugurated on Saturday 4th January 1992. The self-styled leader of the 'Parliament', Dr. Kalim Siddiqui, described the new institution as "the most original and innovative piece of social engineering" in Britain (37). But as a "a pro-Iranian radical group...whose media exposure and grandiose self-titling of 'Parliament' far outstrips its support or organization in the Muslim community" (38) is questionable whether the 'Parliament' will meet the high expectations of its leadership. Rather, many may come to see it as simply a political pressure group. Whatever the 'Parliament' does or does not manage to achieve, it has raised awareness of the Muslim presence in Britain. And against criticism of not being representative, the Parliament appeals to critics to look at its membership, comprising as it does of individuals from diverse backgrounds and careers.

The M.P.G.B. consists of two 'houses': from a number of 'Muslim Manifesto groups' around the country, a member is selected for the 'lower' house. An 'upper' house of elite Muslim men and women constitutes the second element of Dr. Siddiqui's initiative. Its role is to "consolidate the Muslim community in Britain into the best of all communities" (39). Since its foundation, it has set up numerous sub-committee's to oversee such things of universal concern to most Muslims, such as regulation of the halal meat trade after the 'exposure' of community failings on this matter early in 1994.

The Muslim Parliament, by its use of the word 'parliament' in the name implied something very uncomfortable for the Establishment...though its leader claims that this word 'parliament' was not self-chosen, but rather a media description that 'caught on' later (40). "Maintenance of separate traditions is acceptable if is

implies submission in secondary status, but not where it embodies a demand for parity of esteem and rejection of majority control" (41). The controversy surrounding Siddiqui's 'Parliament' was largely because of its name: "We have called ourselves a parliament because, above all, we are a 'political system' in every sense of that term. We want to take our place among the primary institutions of Great Britain" (42). Certainly, the establishment of such an organization marks a landmark point for the history of Islam in Britain, if not for Muslims. It shows a development beyond mere social and religious interests, important as they are, towards a greater political involvement and a desire for the identity of Muslims to be taken seriously - even if it is only the voice of one man that is heard. It is the kind of initiative that could have only come about after several decades of Muslim presence in Britain, and a wish, if perhaps misguided, to show a united Muslim 'front' to the wider society.

Reaction within the Muslim community to Siddiqui's M.P.G.B. has been mixed. It would seem that he has not pinpointed a dimension of identity with which a majority of Muslims can find some resonance. His themes have not provided the umbrella under which the diversity of Islamic expressions in Britain can unite. Dr. Hesham El-Essawy described Siddique as a "general without troops" (43), while Sahib Mustaqim Bleher of the Islamic Party dismissed the Muslim Parliament as a "publicity stunt which does more harm than good, ghettoizing Muslims by portraying the antagonistic face of Islam as an enemy to British society" (44). Certainly, Siddiqui's isolationist stance holds little promise in Britain's plural society. But for a certain strand of thought within the Muslim community, Siddiqui's message holds unswerving support. Particularly set against the background of world events (Bosnia especially), some fervent young Muslims have found in Siddiqui a 'leader' with whom they can identify.

Siddiqui regards the community in Britain as having reached a point of realization. The first and second generations have come to see that Britain was not the society they thought it was, and not a land of 'milk and honey' as they had expected. The third generation are the inheritors of this situation. But in coming to terms with it, Siddiqui looks optimistically to the future. He regards the success

and appeal of *Hizb-i-Tahrir* among a number of young Muslims as an indication of future success for the Muslim Parliament. Whereas the former is simply a "futuresology" (45) with simplistic ideas and beliefs, the Muslim Parliament will embody ideals with practical initiatives. Already, it has initiated a number of enterprises such as student loans, and soon a careers advisory service is to be established. Siddiqui is orientating many of his efforts towards the younger generations. He is concerned that the minority status of Muslims in Britain should lead to a consolidation of their religious identity, rather than its abandonment.

Besides the two political initiatives outlined above, many Muslims have regarded participation in politics outside mainstream parties as of questionable benefit for the community. Political impact is more likely to be gained from participation in general British politics, and with time Muslim candidates will find an established place in Westminster (though Kalim Siddiqui would not agree with this). Meanwhile, there is one further organization that serves political ends - in the widest sense of the term - though its roots are outside of Britain.

c) The Jamaat-i-Islami

This organisation originated in Pakistan through the inspiration of Maulana Maududi. The *Jamaat* can be linked almost exclusively with the work of the Islamic Foundation in Leicester, with local branches spread around the country; however the U.K. Islamic Mission shares in the ethos of the *Jamaat*. "The findings based on this network analysis suggest that a close relationship exists between *Jamaat-i-Islami*, The Islamic Foundation, the UK Islamic Mission, and the Young Muslims" (46). A single important current runs through each of the different groups which in essence is a reliance on, "ideas which are not bound by the traditions of the mainstream of the Muslim community in the United Kingdom, and which are idealistic in that they seek a return to a 'pure' form of Islam free from the 'innovation' of their elders" (47).

Andrews paints a bleak picture for the influence and impact of the *Jamaat* in Britain. He regards its agenda as too far removed from the Islam practised by the mainstream Muslim community which is

orientated around tradition. As to the future, this thesis suggests that 'traditional' Islam is likely to weaken as the younger generation seek to find a religious identity in Islam free from cultural trappings of the Indian sub-continent. It is likely that more and more young Muslims will look to English language reading material as the impact of community languages weakens. The future for the *Jamaat* amongst young Muslims is perhaps brighter than it has been in the past; many may come to appreciate the 'purist' element of *Jamaat* ideology. Meanwhile, it will no doubt continue the work with which it has been engaged; among other things "propagation of its ideology within the host community by targeting religious and educational establishments in order to affect the host communities perception of Islam" (48). In some senses then, the role of the *Jamaat* has perhaps been diverted; rather than serving primarily as a counterbalancing force to the ideologies of the wider society within the Muslim community, it is instead seeking influence at a much broader level. But it is arguable that this is just another way of reaching back into the community by having an impact on young educated Muslim students, though this effort may still be in its infancy.

5.1.11. Muslim Leadership and Institutions

So far the leadership of the community at a local level has been in the hands of first and second generation Muslims, especially where the running of mosques is concerned. As such, many organizations and mosques have reflected their interests and concerns; often this has been inadequate for the needs of the younger generation. While the elders may still be involved with often irrelevant issues, the younger generations feel they have been let down by the imams and community leaders. As young people, they are facing numerous practical and conceptual problems that their predecessors have failed to address. They are asking: 'if I go to a gurdwara with a Sikh friend, or a church with a Christian friend, do I become any less Muslim?'; or, 'When will I find a job, and what should I do if it conflicts with Islamic tradition?'. Youth organizations are the forum for much debate of this kind; some elders may be horrified by even the questions posed by the young, let alone the answers that may emerge.

Besides the imam's and local community leaders, a number of leadership organizations have been developed to meet the interests and demands of British Muslims. Perhaps the most early pioneering organisation was the U.K. Islamic Mission, founded in 1962 with the aim of stirring Muslims to a "consciousness of Islam and the realization and dissemination of the teachings of Islam in their own lives as well as those of their fellow human beings" (49). To meet this aim, numerous smaller groups and branches were founded nationwide, with headquarters in London. The Mission has been instrumental in a number of local initiatives, many centering around educational and socio-cultural issues. Though a national organisation, the U.K. Islamic Mission has apparently never claimed to speak authoritatively for the Muslim community in Britain.

This initiative was followed some ten years later with the establishment of the Islamic Foundation, inaugurated as an institution concerned principally with education, both within and without of the Muslim community. Though ostensibly a separate institution, it has strong connections with the U.K. Islamic Mission. During the course of its history, this Leicester-based institution has built up a reputation for hosting Islamic conferences, publishing, and training programmes for health and social workers dealing with Muslims in the course of their careers. The early pioneers of the Foundation were from Pakistan, and much of their inspiration was based upon the ideas of Maulana Maududi and the *Jamaat-i-Islami*.

The Union of Muslim Organizations (U.M.O.) was established in 1970, with the aim of bringing together representatives from nationwide Muslim institutions. Its rationale was to assist "Muslim organizations in Britain and Ireland in providing facilities to the Muslims living in their respective areas so as to enable them to lead an Islamic way of life" (50). The U.M.O. has come to have something of a representative role for British Islam, and has often been recognised as such by the Government. Back in October 1993, the Home Secretary Michael Howard, speaking at the U.M.O. annual Eid Milad gathering praised it since "the views it expresses are developed responsibly, moderately and after full consultation with the community" (51). But

contradicting this in March 1994, Michael Howard in a meeting of community leaders, stressed that the disunity of the Muslim community was only obstacle to its development. It was reported that "he claimed that the existence of half a dozen groups, all claiming to be the true representatives of Muslims in Britain, was not only misleading but also made it difficult for the Home Office to identify the issues which mattered most to the community" (52). Former Home Secretaries have also given indications that the Home Office has recognised U.M.O. as a representative body (53).

The issue of Muslim unity is still a dilemma however within the community itself. Recognition of this has led to moves which aim to bring about a national consultative body for the British Muslim community. Nationwide leaders will meet in the summer of 1994 to discuss this issue, inviting many current leaders and representatives of existing organizations (54).

A more recent but also high-profile Muslim association is the U.K. Action Committee on Islamic Affairs, formed in 1988 as a forum uniting Muslims from different organizations, mosques, and scholars, in the wake of the Rushdie affair. The principle rationale of the Committee was to mobilize Muslims of all backgrounds in campaigning for the protection of Islam in view of Rushdie's book. The UKACIA has a representative role on this issue. The Policy Studies Institute researcher Tariq Modood regards UKACIA as the epitome of the "suit-and-tie Islam" (55). Given its general brief, the aim of UKACIA has gone on from just the Rushdie affair itself, but rather the issues that it raises, especially discrimination for religious beliefs and incitement to hatred.

A number of other Islamic organizations play a leadership role for different sections of the Muslim community in Britain. For example, the U.K. Council of Imams unites those who have a role in the leadership of mosques at a local level. Given the overwhelmingly high proportion of young people in the Muslim community, numerous youth organizations have been established to meet the particular needs of younger Muslims. Some of these have been outlined.

Muslims organizations have been trying at different levels to create a space for Islam in Britain. Issues of community leadership are at the forefront of debate. One of the key issues is the importation of imam's from various countries of the Muslim world. Many have argued that these leaders have little appreciation of the real needs of mosque communities, and, combined with their often poor command of English their relevance for the future of British Islam is questionable. As such, the psyche of 'imported' imam's tends to be ill-attuned to a minority community facing challenge from a secular, liberal society. Coming themselves from Muslim countries, they are often ill-equipped for providing a balance to the forces of the wider society that threaten Muslim identity. Many of the imported imam's are the educational failures of their own societies. Aspiring middle class Muslims living say, in Pakistan, will encourage their sons to become doctors or lawyers. If they fail to make the grade to pursue such careers, they may as a second best be directed, for example, towards the army. It is perhaps the least educated urban dwelling sons that head for the madrassah to pursue a 'religious career'. The theology promoted by many of the foreign imam's tends to emphasise a rigid division between the values of Islam and the ideologies of the West in such a way as to suggest incompatibility.

"Islam is presented as an ideological movement confronted with the ideology of the West and of capitalist secular society. Whereas the latter is said by Muslims to have lost its moral signposts, they claim that Islam proposes a sense of purpose with moral precepts...To the overriding selfish individualism of the West is contrasted Muslim collective responsibility....They are preoccupied with the potentially pernicious influence of Westernism, which is the ruling ideology of the society in which they live" (56).

The overemphasizing of negative Western influence brings to the fore the identity of a Muslim and his or her essential *difference* against those of the wider society. And while the moral and social conservatism of Islam may indeed be the antidote to Western social ills, the drawing of an over-rigid distinction seems unhelpful for the young generation whose future rests upon successfully taking part and contributing to the life of this country. The drawing of a rigid division between what is *halal* and *haram* may encourage a separatist identity.

Another interesting difference in terms of preaching themes can be drawn between imam's resident in Britain, and those from abroad. The former place more emphasis on *da'wah* or mission towards the wider society; the latter simply exhort Muslims to uphold Islamic standards within their own lives and communities, believing that this in itself will serve as the necessary example to encourage people to Islam (57).

The training of imam's and religious scholars who have been born and raised in Britain remains of great importance, thus making the Muslim College for the training of imam's and Islamic scholars in London of importance for a successful relationship between Islam and the West (58). But the Muslim community has another important resource, the value of which may only be recognised with hindsight. Over the last ten years or so, there has emerged a group of Islamic scholars, some well-rooted in communities, others not, but who nevertheless share a deep concern for the development of Islam in Britain. Names such as Ziauddin Sardar, Akbar Ahmed, Zaki Badawi, Tariq Modood, Dr. Darsh, and Shabbir Akhtar are individuals who represent another kind of leadership for British Muslims. They act as intellectual 'mirrors' for the community, reflecting back some of the changes and trends that are emerging. Furthermore, standing back from many of the day-to-day concerns of particular Muslim communities, they are in a perhaps better position to reflect from a much wider perspective on the directions the community should take. It is among this group of Muslim intellectuals that calls are often heard for a regeneration of Islam which remains close to the essence of the faith, but which finds expression in a way suited to the cultural milieu of Britain. Ziauddin Sardar argues, "certain traditions of what clothes are worn or teaching children the Koran (sic) by rote and terror must go" (59). More and more up-and-coming educated third generation Muslims will find that such words resonate as appropriate to their aspirations and situation in Britain.

5.1.12. International Connections

Given the now infamous 'global village' situation, Muslim youth in Britain are under the influence not just of leaders/scholars/movements in this country, but also from those in other parts of the world. In some small way, they are caught up with the world wide process going on, identified by Ernest Gellner (60) of a move from Low Islam (folk Islam of the masses, shrines, saints etc) to a High Islam which stresses stricter adherence to the Shari'ah, strict monotheism, and sobriety, previously associated with urban scholars. With the changes that have taken place in many post-colonial Muslim societies - improved communication, transport in particular - the Islam of a minority has become open to many more people. It is underpinned by an ideology of "self-rectification, purification, of recovery" (61). This ideology has also pervaded the religious identity of some young British Muslims, in giving them ideals to which they may be committed, personally and on a world-wide scale.

Young people have seen the failure of numerous secular ideologies that have pervaded the Muslim world, such as nationalism, Arabism and secularism. Set against this, they have seen the success of more Islamically orientated political systems. Thus Islamic solutions are sought as a way of overcoming tensions and re-discovering roots. The publications of popularist foreign preachers who use the medium of English cannot be underestimated in their impact on young British Muslims. At a meeting of the *Al-Khilafah* organisation to be held in Wembley, London in August 1994, the majority of the speakers are from abroad...Jordan, Pakistan.

Another way in which international connections support the religious identity of the community is through the connections and relationships between 'split families' which involve some degree of travel and contact. Though the cost of air travel has reduced dramatically over the past decades, it still remains high enough to limit the number of times that members of a family can make foreign visits. Furthermore, the kind of influence that distant relatives can make on British Muslims is likely to decrease as more and more young

Muslims establish their families in Britain. But in the early years of the community in Britain, relatives living abroad kept up as much contact as possible with their immigrant sons/daughters, fearful for their religious and ethnic sensibilities in the new country.

5.1.13. The articulation of community demands

As a result of the tensions and prejudice experienced by many British Muslims, especially as a result of the Gulf War, the Rushdie affair, the individual racist attacks that have caught media attention, there has been a growing demand for voluntary-aided Muslim schools and legal protection for Muslims against religious discrimination. But how far have such reactive demands gone in shaping the self-perception of the community? Those articulate Muslims who are campaigning for protection and rights have a certain platform from which to rally other Muslims. They are in a position for defining community identity *vis-a-vis* the wider society, simply because of the way they can pinpoint social and religious needs.

5.1.14. Conclusion

The Muslim community in Britain has maintained and established a number of organizations and institutions which develop and support identity for individuals, and for the community. These facilities help to preserve the beliefs, values, and ethics of Islam, with mosques and the family playing pivotal roles. They serve to protect the undisputable beliefs of Muslims, whether through providing information, or simply the ethos in which religious identity can flourish. This support-system created by the community may be likened to a series of concentric circles, each one taking its place and radiating out from the central core institutions of mosque and family.

Institutional completeness has been an important part of religious identity maintenance for Muslims in Britain during the course of their history. In the early days of male migration, the organisation of prayer facilities was paramount; but once women and children arrived in Britain, the nurturing of new members of the faith into an Islamic

identity meant that the family institution took on a primary role. The mosque supported this responsibility. Over the past thirty years, the community has built-up a reservoir of talents, experiences, and organizations intended to support the religious identity of existing members, and for those in the future.

5.2. Identity Formation and Situational Conflict

There is a certain paradox facing Muslims in Britain. They live in an environment of liberalism which goes far enough in theory to allow them to practice their religion unhampered by others; but liberal ideology does not go towards *protecting* Islamic values, especially when it comes to Muslim mainstream involvement, eg. in education. Many Muslims therefore hold opinions about British society along a continuum; at one end there are those who stress the freedom and opportunities for Muslims in Britain, while at the other end there are those who regard the structures, ideologies and 'Establishment' as inimical to real Muslim interests and community development. The large majority of Muslims are perhaps likely to be at the middle point of such extremes. But in the midst of such divergent opinions, the establishment of an identity amid the competing ideologies that surround young Muslims is likely to remain problematic.

Many in the Muslim community are still attached to Islam from emotional ties rather than intellectual ones. This situation must change in the face of ideological challenges from the wider society in order that beliefs are held with conviction and understanding. It is important that comprehension of Islam in this way takes place in the environment in which it is being practiced...a minority one. Muslims need to understand what it means to believe in Islam in these surroundings. This also means understanding the society of which they are a part. Such a comprehension can bring with it the tools for community development and the establishment of identity for individuals.

This process seems to be taking place among a so-far small, but extremely important group of young Muslims. They are those who have remained close to the sources of Islam, and yet who have

become extremely liberal in some matters, and in outward appearances seem quite assimilated. Confidence in their understanding of Islam frees them to fully interact in society, and contribute to it. They can join forces with other people - of all religious/philosophical backgrounds - in condemning the problems of society in general and those pose a threat to fundamental human and religious values, not just Muslim one's. Such individuals are working towards positive solutions for the Islamic community, and as such, they contrast with those who retreat into a world of anti-Western propaganda. Those who are working for the Muslim community in the academic field are most likely to generate the intellectual resources needed for development of Islam in Britain...though it may take some time for their ideas to have a trickle-down effect.

Young Muslims face on the one hand discrimination on the basis of their ethnic difference from the wider society, but also they encounter discrimination from within their own communities, mainly from the traditionalists. The elders may see them as somehow 'contaminated' by their involvement with the wider society. Identity developing out of this dual tension is likely to be fragile and insecure until those structures have been established, based on intellectual development, to counter these difficulties. Until this time, the tension between innovators and traditionalists is likely to remain.

"The younger generation walks a psychological tightrope, coping with the school, and its racism and the alien curriculum, while at the same time protecting the older generation, respecting their needs and dreams" (62). Furthermore,

"members of national minorities in modern states are subjected to powerful contradictions. On the one hand they are regaled with promises of free and equal participation in society for all individuals...On the other they are face with a continuing reality of *communalism among themselves*. This discrepancy creates tremendous dilemmas for them, and throws up moral and political issues for society as a whole. Minority individuals, suspended in limbo between the promise of full integration and the fear of continued exclusion, are faced all the time with impossible questions about their identity" (63 my italics).

The question comes down to whether they can realistically take part as equal members of society, or whether to ghettoize themselves with those who have experienced the pitfalls of believing in a dream. In the context of minority status in Britain, identity often appears to have been constructed by *reaction* to external events, rather than from a *proactive* perspective. For example, the Rushdie affair brought about a re-affirmation of Islam among a number of young people: crisis strengthened belief and action in a reactive manner. This is not to undervalue Islam; it is simply that such issues brought to the fore a latent identity for many.

At a personal level, many of the younger generation face a conflict in their lives which may be reduced to the "problem of the relative emphasis to give to personal rather than to collective action" (64). Decisions regarding action, usually on cultural matters, have to be taken every day. For many of the first generation, their participation in cultural habits and preferences was almost unconscious. For the youth, many actions constitute decision-making issues. The pressures of the individualistic society force self-identity by making them consider personal interest over wider social ties. Furthermore, the "duality of modern society" (65) imposes itself on the consciousness.

Modern society imposes a number of identities upon its members. One is forced to compartmentalize roles, according to the situation in which one finds oneself.

"The incumbency of a number of roles means that an individual also has a number of social selves. When action the role of, say, scientist, the identity of a devoted father and husband is, as it were, in the background as a *latent identity*" (66).

The more individualistic and personalized practice of Islam may make Muslim identity one of several roles, albeit a most important one, but one that nevertheless can be played down in certain circumstances. This can be offset against another possibility...that Islam imposes a *total identity*, an umbrella under which all other roles are expressed, and which carry the sense of being Muslim.

5.3. The Religious Identity of the Future Generation

"Now a vast number of migrants and their families live in secular European democracies in which religion is a matter of the private domain and not a matter of public focus as far as individual belief and practice are concerned. Both sociological as well as social expectations that the importance of religion will begin to decline among minority communities may prove to be untrue. Most of these communities are forming and developing their particular institutions. They are concerned with building temples and mosques and places of worship which are appropriate for their religious needs. Manifestation of their belief system culturally as well as in the urban space will increase as they consolidate their settlement in Europe" (67).

Part of this process of building up institutions relates to community identity. By establishing places of worship and a place for Islam in the locality, *individuals* are more able to define themselves by location in such a way that a religious dimension can be included. This is particularly important for the younger generations who cannot look nostalgically back into their history to a time when they lived in Pakistan or India. Rather they are British Muslims who take as part of their overall identity a sense of belonging to a particular local community.

"Can we legitimately assume a commonality of experience and identity that constitutes the Muslim presence in Britain? Are North African Muslims settled in London, Pakistanis in Bradford, Bangladeshis in Spitalfields, and white British Muslims to be regarded as having identical welfare needs? Clearly not, for these are persons of distinct ethnic identities who share a religious faith. So we need to confront a paradoxical diversity: Islam transcends ethnicity but is always mediated through it. Islam is universal, while ethnicity is usually linked to territorial identities" (68).

For the future generations more of their ethnic identity will be cast along British lines, simply due to the developing history of the community. They are already showing signs of this, evidence of which is their search for the 'universals' of Islam and identification with the *ummah*. As young Muslims of different ethnic backgrounds begin to mix with each other, as Muslims, their common religious identity, mediated through their lives in Britain, is likely to take on

a character of its own that would look quite unfamiliar to their first generation migrant relatives.

"All the research evidence shows that Muslims in Britain are making some adjustments in order to participate effectively in the economic, educational and civic institutions, and that other relationships with the rest of society are minimal. There seem to be two main reasons for this:

- 1) to maintain their religious identity as a minority group: and
- 2) to reduce feelings of rejection and the problems associated with belonging to a minority in an unsympathetic environment" (69).

It is the role of future scholarship to chart some of these changes. There is an important minority of young Muslims in Britain who are not only devoted Muslims, but also fully participating in the wider society when it comes to general social life. Those Muslims who especially belong to the 'professional' class seem to fit into this category. They appear to be confident in their religious identity, and they do not rely on outward signs of this identity to bolster their inner sense of being Muslim. As a consequence they can mix freely with non-Muslims in the wider society, without feeling threatened, or compromising their Islam. They are perhaps the one's who most aspire to being recognised as 'British Muslims'.

"Although it used to be supposed that young Asians, particularly girls, were at the mercy of two contradictory cultures, a different assertion - framed by recent events - has come to prominence which suggests that religion has become a focus in the quest for a meaningful personal identity" (70). Such was the opinion of Dr. Kim Knott late in 1992, as a concluding comment in a Leverhulme project on young Asians and religion in Britain. But the project threw up an inevitable piece of information. The young people interviewed were part of a rapidly changing and extremely fluid socio-cultural environment; identity with Western, Asian, or secular Asian culture was often situationally dependent. This emphasizes one of the assertions of this research...that identity is a process, not a static and unchanging entity. The project undertaken at Leeds offers some useful information regarding 'orientations' of identity with regard to religion and ethnicity (71).

Notes for Chapter Five

(1) Peter Berger, *The Social Reality of Religion*, Faber & Faber, 1969, p47.

(2) BBC2 'East' 4/5/94 - surveyed a number of Asian dating agencies and the concerns of some of their clients.

(3) Christopher Lamb, *Belief in A Mixed Society*, Lion Publishing plc., 1985, p71.

(4) Steven Barton, Sermons for Europe - The Preaching of a Bradford Imam, *Muslims in Europe Series*, Birmingham: C.S.I.C., paper no.29, March 1986, p9.

(5) Tom Kitwood and Carol Borrill, The Significance of Schooling for an Ethnic Minority, in *Oxford Review of Education*, vol.6.3, 1980, p247.

(6) Mohammad Raza, *Islam in Britain: Past, Present and the Future*, Leicester: Volcano Books, 1991, p49.

(7) *The Independent*, 30/3/94. Headline..."Police Storm Occupied Mosque", p2.

(8) *Newsletter of the Islamic Cultural Centre*, no.39, April 1988, cited in Mohammad Raza, op. cit., p49.

(9) Mohammad Raza, op. cit., p49.

(10) John Eade, The Political Articulation of Community and the Islamization of Space in London, in *Religion and Ethnicity: Minorities and Social Change in the Metropolis*, The Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1993, p33.

(11) *ibid.*, p40.

(12) Daniele Joly, Making a Place for Islam in British Society: Muslims in Birmingham, in Tomas Gerholm and Yngve Georg Lithman, *The New Islamic Presence in Western Europe*, London: Mansell, 1988, p39.

(13) *ibid.*, p43.

(14) Mohammad Raza, op. cit., p57.

(15) Daniele Joly, op. cit., p72. This situation is likely to change later this year - at least in Bradford - with the announcement by city councillors and community leaders of a redundant primary school that is to become the first Muslim voluntary-aided school. It is to be handed over to the governors of the Muslim Girls Community High Schools (a private establishment) (*The Guardian*, 31/5/94).

(16) Tom Kitwood and Carol Borrill, op. cit., p241.

(17) *ibid.*, p247.

(18) *ibid.*, p250.

- (19) Islamic Press Agency, London, *Arabia*, June 1985, p84.
- (20) Muhammad Anwar, *Young Muslims in Britain: Attitudes, Educational Needs and Policy Implications*, Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1994, p6.
- (21) M. Mashuq ibn Ally, *The Growth and Organisation of the Muslim Community in Britain*, Birmingham, CSIC Papers, no1., March 1979, p9.
- (22) *The Independent*, 28/4/94.
- (23) *ibid.*
- (24) Kathy Evans, 'Radical time-bomb under British Islam', in *The Guardian*, 7/2/94. The emergence of this article is of interest in itself...suddenly as a result of it, Hizb ut Tahrir was on the lips of everyone concerned with Islam in Britain. On the basis of one piece of journalism, interest in British Muslims took a different turn, shifting media attention from the antics of Kalim Siddique and the Muslim Parliament towards a new dimension of extremism, this time orientated around Muslim youth.
- (25) Haleh Afshar, *Schools and Muslim Girls: Gateway to a Prosperous Future or Quagmire of Racism? Some Experiences from West Yorkshire*, in Rohit Barot, *op. cit.*, p59.
- (26) Peter Berger, *op. cit.*, p20.
- (27) Mary Stopes-Roe & Raymond Cochrane, *Citizens of this Country: The Asian-British*, Multilingual Matters, 1990, see pages 151-3.
- (28) Geoff Dench, *Minorities in the Open Society*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986, p158.
- (29) Ahmed Andrews, *Sociological Analysis of Jamaat-i-Islami in the United Kingdom*, in Rohit Barot (ed) *Religion and Ethnicity: Minorities and Social Change in the Metropolis*, The Netherlands: Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1993, p75.
- (30) '*Q News*' 15/1/93.
- (31) *ibid.*
- (32) *ibid.*
- (33) '*Q News*' 12/2/93.
- (34) see for example '*Q News*', 20/11/92, on Men's *hijab*.
- (35) Mohammad Raza, *op. cit.*, p90.
- (36) Saeeda Khanum, *The Search for Power, New Statesman and Society*, 10/1/92, p14.
- (37) Cited in the Editorial of *The Daily Telegraph*, 4/1/92.
- (38) Saeeda Khanum, *op. cit.*

(39) *ibid.*

(40) Dr. Kalim Siddiqui made this comment to me during an interview with him on 18/5/94.

(41) Geoff Dench, *op. cit.*, p159.

(42) Saeeda Khanum, *op. cit.*

(43) Ian Thompson, 'False Prophet', in *The Sunday Times*, 14/6/92.

(44) Saeeda Khanum, *op. cit.*

(45) Dr. Kalim Siddiqui during an interview on 18/5/94.

(46) Ahmed Andrews, *op. cit.*, p75.

(47) *ibid.*, p74.

(48) *ibid.*, p77.

(49) M. Mashuq ibn Ally, *The Growth and Organisation of the Muslim Community in Britain*, Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian - Muslim Relations, Birmingham, March 1979, paper no.1.

(50) *ibid.*

(51) 'Q' News, 25/4/94.

(52) *ibid.*

(53) *The Muslim News*, no.62, 29/4/94.

(54) *ibid.*

(55) Tariq Modood, Muslim views on Religious Identity and Racial Equality in *New Community*, vol.19.3, April 1993.

(56) Daniele Joly, *op.cit.*, p40.

(57) Steven Barton, *op. cit.*

(58) The Muslim College in Ealing, London is headed by Zaki Badawi. The College has been described as representing the "assumptions of a more open and positive stance in the teaching of Islamic studies, combining the virtues of Western methodology with those of Islamic learning. It also aims to convey Islamic ideas in a way that will be comprehensible to the educated European" (*Religions in the U.K.: a Multi-Faith Directory*, compiled and researched by Paul Weller and Rachelle Castle, University of Derby and the Interfaith Network for the United Kingdom, 1993, p405.)

(59) Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, 'A New Islam for the West', in *The Independent*, 14/2/94.

(60) Ernest Gellner, *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion*, London: Routledge, 1992.

(61) *ibid.*, p20.

(62) Haleh Afshar, Schools and Muslim Girls: Gateway to a Prosperous Future or Quagmire of Racism? Some Experiences from West Yorkshire, in Rohit Barot, *op. cit.*, p57.

(63) Geoff Dench, *op. cit.*, p1 & 156.

(64) Geoff Dench, p156.

(65) *ibid.*, p157.

(66) Steven Cotgrove, *The Science of Society*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1967, p233.

(67) Rohit Barot, Religion, Ethnicity and Social Change: An Introduction, *op. cit.*, p14.

(68) Waqar Ahmad & Charles Husband, Religious Identity, Citizenship and Welfare: The Case of Muslims in Britain, in *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, vol.10.2, 1993.

(69) Muhammad Anwar, *op. cit.*, p23.

(70) Kim Knott, *The Changing Character of the Religions of the Ethnic Minorities of Asian Origin in Britain*, Leeds University Community Religions Project, 1992.

(71) *ibid.*, pp36-38.

CHAPTER SIX

Chapter Six - Conclusion

In this thesis the concept of identity, and more specifically religious identity has been examined in relation to the presence of Muslims in Britain. Identity has not been presented as a static phenomenon or a given: rather it is a *process*. And in the course of determining identity, consideration must be shown not just for the group into which one has been born, but also the historical and situational context of the group in question. This thesis has attempted to outline some of the socio-ideological forces that impinge upon individuals in modern Western society, and to consider how these have affected Muslims in particular.

Muslims in Britain are located in a highly pluralistic society marked by ideological diversity, as well as numerous other ethnic and religious groups. Some of the dynamics of identity maintenance and the pressures upon identity in such a situation have been examined. It would seem clear that for many young people today, including Muslims, a harbouring of a multiplicity of identities will be inevitable given the highly fragmented nature of socialization agents...parents, school, peer group. But for many young Muslims, a sense of having a religious identity based upon Islam remains immutable. This situation seems to point to a differentiation between 'core identity' and 'role identity' (1). This is the useful distinction made by Brittan, and his observation ties together some of the analysis and theory regarding identity from the previous chapters.

"The cross-cutting of role-relationships in industrial societies makes it very difficult for the individual to establish a core-system of meanings which are in any way related to each other. Hence we can assume that there is continual tension in a person's identity. The distinction can be made between *core identity*, i.e. the essential self which will be strongly defended, and *role identities*, i.e. the character that an individual devises for himself as an occupant of a particular social position" (2).

In other words, the sense of being a Muslim will be strongly defended by many Muslims, and, for those for whom this is a generally *latent identity*, its character will often come to the fore at times of personal stress or community tension. *Role identities* refer

to those dimensions of life where as well as being first and foremost a Muslim, the individual is also playing a certain part as a member of a family, part of a peer group, student at a particular school, and so on; an awareness of being Muslim will be more or less strong. In a study being conducted by the Policy Studies Institute in London by Tariq Modood, it has strongly emerged just how central Islam is as a religious identity to the sample of seventy-five young Muslims (3). It is emerging from the study that role identities surrounding this core cannot, as far as possible, be incompatible with the religious dimension.

Earlier in this study it was pointed out that for a Muslim, their identity as a member of the *din* of Islam is likely to have an overarching impact on all dimensions of life. But for many, this awareness is perhaps weakening under the pressures of different Western ideologies, and combined with this, for young Muslims there is still a considerable discrepancy between their different 'worlds' in the home and school. For some, their perception of Islam has perhaps changed in order to bridge this gap.

"The mediation of acutely discrepant worlds by significant others during primary socialization may result in a person's identifying himself with two discrepant worlds, a common situation in ethnically pluralistic societies. Alternation of identities in the sense that there is a movement back and forth or oscillation between two worlds is a real possibility. It may be noted that an individual may internalize different realities without identifying them" (4).

The identity of Muslims as constituting a number of different collective ethnic groups in Britain appears to be changing somewhat as a result of adaptation of individual identity on the part of the younger generation. As a number of cultural customs slowly begin to erode under the pressure of being a minority, the identity of the younger generation now appears more unified with the focal point provided by Islam. A number of the third generation have put aside their different ethnic or racial backgrounds, and instead have found commonality of experience and identity through Islam. Epstein expresses this dynamic process thus...

"Three elements may be recognized...in situations where new social identities are generated. In there first place there is some disturbance of the natural and/or social environment, bringing disruption to some established sets of social relationships. Individuals and groups are thus impelled into fresh confrontations with the self, leading to the buttressing of established forms of inclusiveness or to the emergence of new expressions of exclusiveness and separateness...(5).

In the case of young Muslims, the latter case seems to express their situation. Their expression of separateness is in their essential identity *as Muslims*, rather than Pakistanis or Bangladeshis. Some recent evidence to support this claim came from the recent '*Q News*' survey among its readers. It was reported that...

"When asked to describe themselves as one of the following: Asian, Pakistani, Arab, European, or Muslim, an overwhelming majority (males 90& females 78%) wanted it to be known that they were Muslims. Only 4% of both sexes ticked 'Asian'. The (second) biggest concern for females was 'identity' (24%)" (6).

Of course this survey gathered data from a self-selected group, but nevertheless, the results are instructive in serving to illustrate the concern with identity among a significant group of young Muslims.

The future of the community in Britain rests to some extent upon the interaction of the third generation with the leadership of the Muslim community. At the moment, there appears to be a split between the traditionalist *imams*, and elite intellectuals who have little direct contact with communities. Bridging the gap between them is likely to occur over time with the changing history of Islam in Britain. Furthermore, the tension between what is imposed on the community from the wider society as against those forces that exist within the boundary of particular communities can be expected to lessen as proactive rather than reactive strategies develop. An important element of this progression is the emergence of *young* leaders who can act as 'role models' in offering leadership, authority, and a clear message of direction.

The Islam of young Muslims today in the West is one of a particular new form of religious expression that takes into account the migration

experience of community elders, minority status, religion, and the ideologies of the West. From amid a 'community of identities' and religious expressions that currently exist, some universal factors for religious identity are emerging that transcend particular contextual factors. Some 'core' elements of Islam are being discovered as less attention is given to the minutiae of boundaries separating the different ethnic and linguistic traditions of the community. The paraphernalia of the cultural vehicles which brought Islam to Britain are losing their hold. The minority position of the community appears to have been more readily accepted and faced by the younger generation; the environment of 'majority mentality' is not effective for their participation in the wider society. Whereas the first generation saw the world outside of their particular communities as somehow threatening, the younger generation have experienced it very differently. They seem to have adjusted psychologically to the experience of diversity and plurality.

The process outlined by Jan Thurlings at the beginning of this thesis (7) now appears to be underway. The religious identity that is emerging for many young Muslims is as a result of their perception of where they are "relevantly different" (8) from the wider society. This is set against their particular relationship to those forces and communities that surround them. A religious identity based upon *Islam* as a particular faith tradition and way of life appears to be the dimension of self-perception which they have regarded as paramount and pertinent to the particular situation in which they find themselves. In other words it is the religious aspect that makes them "relevantly different" from the wider society. This negotiation of a religious identity founded upon Islamic sources is taking place for individuals and groups. Bryan Wilson's argument that religion no longer answers the question "who are we?" as opposed to "who am I?", (9) does not seem to fit the developments taking place among the community of young Muslims. Though individualism does appear to have affected the third generation Muslim community, there are many of them who share a common experience and can thus find many mutual points of self-understanding. For many of them, Islam seems to be legitimately offering a means by which to answer the question "who are we"?

As more of the cultural baggage of the first generation in particular is lost, the religious identity of other Muslims from different ethnic backgrounds can become more apparent. While adherence to the particular schools of thought that are prevalent in the 'motherland' still prevails (10), each *madhhab* is regarded as orthodox by those following a different legal orientation. In the first chapter of this thesis the recognition of intra-religious diversity among Jews was cited in relation to a common religious identity (11). It now seems more likely that a replacement of the category 'Classical Judaism' with 'young Muslims' fits the experience of many of those from the third generation. As the community has developed, is it more legitimate to say now..."since (young Muslims) separate the question of identity from commitment, pluralism can exist in (Muslim) life in that context of unity derived from the perception that, notwithstanding a diversity of commitments, all in the pluralistic community are (Muslims)"...? (12). This thesis argues that a development in this direction is occurring, especially among those young Muslims who are confident of their identity *vis-a-vis* the wider society, and other religious standpoints within their own tradition. They have negotiated an identity from out of a multitude of 'identity options' available to them, certainly in comparison to many of their parents. An awareness of this identity is more or less conscious for most, depending on a range of factors affecting them; from those immediately having an impact on them, to those which are more related to wider social processes within and without of their community.

While mosques in Britain are still somewhat separated due to the different schools of thought that are followed within them, this separation is perhaps less compounded by ethnic and linguistic division compared to the early days of the community. Especially among the younger generation, there is often a willingness to put aside these differences when confronting wider social issues that affect all Muslims, regardless of their *madhhab*. Theoretical orientations can be suspended in order to unite under the banner of Islam. The sense of difference in terms of religious and personal identity from the society at large - when it comes to values and

beliefs - can be harnessed and shared by those who may have quite varying opinions on the smaller issues of law within the Islamic tradition.

For many the development of identity is a natural and progressive process of personal maturation. For others, the dynamics of identity-construction and maintenance is less than stable, and radical or extreme behaviour is evident. But after an examination of Erik Erikson's theory of identity, eccentricity or overenthusiasm can be seen as simply part of an alternative way for a person to 'find him or herself' from out of the complexity and diversity that characterizes modern life (13). The appeal of extremism in such organizations as *Hizb-ut-Tahrir* can be seen in this light, especially where such groups orientate their ideologies around the future (14)...a dimension which corresponds directly with one of the 'Five Pillars of Modernity' outlined by Peter Berger (15).

The younger generation of Muslims in Britain appear to have a different hierarchy of identities compared to their parents and grandparents. For elder members of the community their identity was founded upon their regional origins in, for example, Pakistan; this was in many ways allied to religious identity, but the boundary between the two was not drawn for many...there was no need to do so. In comparison, young Muslims are looking towards the stability that comes from religious identification on which to base their self-perception. The myths and theological constructs of Islam are more enduring compared to the transience of particular contexts and locations, especially when combined with the constantly shifting trends of modern life itself. The inner harmony and stability that can come from a personal identity that has been 'sacralized' through regular commitment and practice of religion will have a greater emotional hold than the fluidity of passing fashions. An anchoring of personal identity in regular practice of religious rituals offsets the confusion that can come from the disparate beliefs and ideologies that modern society offers.

Young Muslims have variable relationships to the countries from which their parents originated. Especially for those who may feel not

identification either with the home-land, or with Britain, there is no basis for them to identify themselves in terms of location. But in Islam, the *Ka'bah* provides a focal point on earth; indeed, it has been described for Muslims as the "navel of the earth" (16). The hope of completing the *hajj* is the...

"expression of the constant centrality of the *Ka'bah* and its environs in the practice and faith of Islam. It is a geographical expression of religious heritage" (17).

Because of the rootlessness that some young Muslims may feel (18) in Britain, some may strongly identify with the centrality of the *Ka'bah*, and with it the *ummah* or wider community of Muslims. In some senses, this worldwide perspective characterizes a bi-monthly Muslim magazine in Britain known as '*Trends*'. Many of the articles focus on issues relating of *iman* (faith) in general, and the situation of the Muslim community in different parts of the world. The language style of '*Trends*' is quite different to the 'trendy' tones of '*Q News*': the former is still nurtured by the baggage of 'sending societies', and this is reflected in the flavour of the magazine. Little attention is given to the issues facing young Western Muslims. That the international focus of '*Trends*' has found a market in Britain seems to indicate a wish to strongly identify with the wider *ummah* (19) as a worldwide community of believers.

As a young person grows up in society, certain demands are made of them; the social world issues various expectations, whether these be parents, local community, or religious organization. In meeting the requirements, youth will...

"call upon the available and personally resonant ideological resources of their environments, particularly those that are embodied in charismatic and convincing leaders. They will seek sponsoring groups and figures and will appoint otherwise well-meaning persons as temporary enemies over against whom their identities may be clarified. They may band together in tight cliques, overemphasizing some relatively trivial commonality as a symbol of shared identity" (20).

Therefore in examining the Muslim community in Britain, and some of the groups and trends that are emerging, these must be seen as the

result of an interplay between, and reflection of, the community and the society as a whole. Whatever movements and behaviour that can be identified are as a result of this local dynamic, which of course, must be set against the background of the 'global city'.

This thesis has examined some of the activities of the Muslim community in Britain, especially where these may be seen in the light of responses or reactions to the wider society. At the personal level, the final pages of Chapter Four suggested some patterns of religious identity *vis-a-vis* personal identity models (21)...exclusivist identity, borderline identity and assimilated identity. R.H. Niebuhr has examined three major faith-identity structures which conceptualize two of these. James Fowler summarizes Niebuhr's thesis...

"are we each, in effect, "many selves", adapting and reshaping our identities as we move from one role, relationship or context to another? Do we have one "master identity", correlated with one dominant center of value and power and its community, which so overshadows our other triadic involvements as to make them unimportant for shaping our identity and faith?" (22).

The "many selves" corresponds to the 'borderline identity'...that which is situationally dependent according to the variety of perhaps unrelated groups to which a person belongs. For a young Muslim this might mean being one 'self' at school, another at home with family, and different again at the mosque or with peers. There may be little or no connection between these different selves. The "master identity" typifies the 'exclusivist identity' of Chapter Four, one which overshadows all other possible foci of identity. This illustrates the Muslims whose entire view of the world is subsumed under a religious identification. But Niebuhr offers a third identity 'possibility' which is perhaps an ideal; one that takes the best from the other two in being flexible and yet committed. It is one in which..."we authentically claim faith in an infinite source and center of value and power, in relation to which we are established in identities flexible and integrative enough to unify the selves we are in the various roles and relations we have" (23).

Fowler develops Niebuhr's ideas to suggest that the "many selves" identity is one lacking any central focal point which orders belief or identity. Commitments are provisional and changeable. This picture of identity seems to characterize many young Muslims for whom the infinite variety of influences upon them results in a confused self-perception lacking harmony and integration. The "master identity" is one wherein one invests all efforts into something is not of ultimate concern...to the point that it becomes an idol. The focal point of identity is inappropriate, missing the essence of ultimate concern. This may be expressed in the attitude whereby institutions or causes become more important than that for which they were created. In one extreme form, religious faith may focus on narrow exclusivism, making for example "cardinal virtues of certain avoidances" (24). In this picture of 'master identity', it is possible to identify the rigid sectarianism of some Islamic groups in Britain...or rather their followers; those for whom the drawing of boundaries around their world may become more important than the world itself. It typifies the over-concentration on minutiae religious affairs that has taken place among some British mosque communities.

But in Niebuhr's third conceptual category, it is perhaps possible to identify those younger British Muslims to whom this thesis has already referred (25)...those who have a firm religious identity that is not threatened by active participation in the wider society. It is an identity that does not have to be 'proved' to others by outward appearances.

There appears to have been a significant change in the 'hierarchy of identities' between first, second and third generation Muslims. Where for the migrant generation regional and national symbols of self-identification were often paramount (with Islam as part-and-parcel of this), for the third generation, religious identity has taken precedence over other categories of self-perception. But where, for example, Pakistan may have been bound up with identity for members of the first generation, for some young Muslims, a national identity centred around being 'British' has come to the fore....but the religious dimension remains the mainstay of this identity. In an interview with Mahmud al-Rashid in '*Q News*', he stresses the

development of a *British* Islamic culture (26). As Islam took hold in differing cultural environments over the course of its history, its character has been reflected by its setting. For the Young Muslims President...

"we want to create a British Islamic culture. By doing this we will be carrying on what our great forefathers achieved, who developed Islamic cultures wherever they went. It is our job to be innovative, creative, adventurous, bold, chivalrous and create a new British Islamic culture" (27).

But this question of a British Muslim identity throws up an important question regarding identity hierarchies. Where some young Muslims may want to identify themselves as first and foremost Muslim, *then* British, others seem to be rejecting an identity based upon such a hierarchical structure. This calls for the legitimacy of 'hyphenated identities' where in the phrase 'British Muslim', the word British is a noun rather than an adjective...as in the case of say, 'Chinese-American'. This method of self-definition thus takes into account the *full legitimacy of both identities*, without having to place them in any kind of rank order. If the same could be done for British Muslims, it would be a way of claiming full identification as a British citizen who is also fundamentally a member of the Islamic community. For those Muslims born and brought up in this country, such a method of self-description could be a legitimate means of ascribing identity that takes into account the most pertinent aspects of their experience. In his paper, 'On Not Being White in Britain: Discrimination, Diversity and Commonality' Tariq Modood (28) discusses the notion of 'hyphenated nationality'. He calls for the legitimacy of an identity based upon being say, a 'British-Pakistani'. While this may be appropriate for some, this thesis has argued for the importance of a religious dimension to identity, especially for many of the third generation. Modood's 'hyphenated nationality' leaves this faith aspect aside, thus making it of doubtful application for many young Muslims of Pakistani origins. By now it has become evident how central the faith dimension of identity is, and how religion has functioned to

"provide a coherent orientation in the midst of that more complex and diverse range of involvements. Faith must synthesize values and information; it must provide a basis for identity and outlook" (29).

Those who can stand aside and consider their values and outlook typify an 'Individuative-Reflective faith stance' - a 'stage of faith outlined by James Fowler (30). Confrontation by other ideologies facilitates fresh self-examination of identity.

During the last thirty years, there seems to have been a fundamental shift in categories of self-understanding for British Muslims, particularly among those of Asian origin. This apparent change is especially evident between the first and third generations. Earlier in this thesis it was noted that many of the early migrants did not regard their individual identity as paramount. Rather, the identity of the *biraderi* or family network was the basis for their self-understanding and sense of belonging. Many thought of themselves perhaps as 'we' people; a sense of 'I', 'me' or 'mine' was of secondary importance (31). In contrast, this thesis has charted some of the evidence to show that such a self-definition - on the basis of group belonging - is no longer so prevalent for many third generation Muslims who now want to live independently of their families (32). This move towards a preference for privacy indicates the impact of individualism, as well as suggesting that many young Muslims are literally 'thinking for themselves' in a way that would have been inconceivable for elder members of their families. But this shift towards more 'self-centred' thinking has had an impact on religious affiliation. The way that some young Muslims are using Islam as a way to define themselves - in very personal ways - suggests a very *individualistic* approach to religion that would no doubt appear quite alien to older members of the community. Given the move towards more individualistic ways of thinking by the third generation, it should perhaps come as no surprise that they are using their religious backgrounds as they are. It is providing for them all those benefits that religion can offer to sustain the individual person in the modern age: identity, security, values, boundaries, categories for self-worth and status among peers, and recognition among an in-group. While such affirmations may well have been felt by those of earlier generations, the focus (implicitly and often unconsciously) was the community *per se*, not the individual benefit of members comprising it. The earlier citation of Ernest Gellner's observation of

faith as the "celebration of *community*" , and, "affirmation of the supernatural is de-coded as expression of *loyalty to a social order* and its values" (33 my italics) emphasizes the point. Religion strengthened group identity and alienation in a strange land for the early migrants in a way that is irrelevant for many young Muslims.

Compared to their grandparents in particular, the third generation appear to be more engaged in processes of self-reflection and questioning (34). The issues that are being raised as well as the language being used show many of the hallmarks of a generation living in an individually oriented Western society (35). This does not mean to say that they have broken away from family ties and a sense of belonging to a community. But the community is of value for the support and back-up it provides, rather than the restricting cultural impositions that it can dictate.

Given that many younger Muslims may now have a greater understanding of their faith than their parents (36), it is possible to suggest that in terms of religious knowledge, they differ from earlier generations in not only *what* they believe, but also *how* they believe. Their understanding of Islam is less based upon superstition, and as translations of the Qur'an (alongside the Arabic) become more accepted as necessary for religious instruction, so their understanding of Islam is likely to be more in alignment with the essential 'core' elements of Islam as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. If identity is 'sacralized' by the myths and theological constructs of a faith, as Hans Mol has suggested, then any change in *modes* of belief in religious doctrines is likely to have an impact on identity. Greater knowledge offers a better basis for certainty of conviction, and this in turn can strengthen identity; the effect has a knock-on consequence since it will affect certitude in rituals and commitment.

At the outset of this thesis, Erik Erikson's observation about the 'complementarity and relativity of identity and ideology' was cited (37). His point was made with explicit reference to adolescents who demand from their communities a basis for identity and belief; this in turn "regenerates" the community. As an inherent part of this

connection, at both a personal and communal level, he suggests that there is a striving towards unity in matters of ideology. This is evident among some of the young generation of Britain's Muslims. Since more of their religious knowledge is based upon the sources of Islam, rather than on generational transmission, many are finding common points of agreement on questions of faith. More of their beliefs are centred around abstract beliefs and ideals...on which there can be unity. They have realized that more unites them than separates them, though their backgrounds may be rooted in different ethnic, linguistic or legal backgrounds. The Muslim community is being 'regenerated' from out of the experiences of the third generation who will not stand as victims of their situation, whether in terms of racial harassment or minority status in Britain. They are employing strategies to overcome the insecurities these barriers can impose, whether through anti-racist youth movements, *ummah*-conscious publications, or local initiatives.

In many ways, it may now be argued that study of identity issues in relation to the Muslim community in Britain has come full circle. Though matters of religious identity in particular are now coming to *the fore* in relation to younger members of the community, the whole question of self-perception and communal understanding has been examined throughout the history of the British Muslim presence in Britain. What was begun with Verity Saifullah-Khan, developed through studies undertaken in the 1980's, is now being fulfilled through the scholarship of a wide variety of academics (38). This thesis is just one contribution of many that will pave the way forward towards other accounts of identity. The changes that take place in terms of identity between first and third generation immigrants form studies in themselves, and as such it is possible to say that a period of fulfillment is being approached as the third generation begins to make its mark on society. But soon a new era of scholarship will emerge where many of the issues and questions of earlier academics will be taken for granted.

The history of the Muslims in Britain, and indeed in the West in general, is still relatively short in terms of both Islamic history and human history as a whole. Once the duration of time in which there

has been a Muslim community in Britain has doubled, it is unlikely that scholars will even be talking of a 'fifth' or 'sixth' generation. There is no need to look so far back to the migration experience as communities become well-established features of the society and new questions demand the attention of those with an interest in the British Muslim community.

It is near impossible to offer predictions for the future in the rapidly changing world in which the human race finds itself. Still more difficult it is to suggest how the Muslim community in Britain will appear in the coming decades. But history itself is on the side of those who can look back on the past fourteen hundred years of Islam...

"history has shown that wherever they (Muslims) have gone, they have retained their identity. So many different tribes and race entered the Indo-Pakistan-Bangladesh sub-continent and got merged into an amalgam of a multifaceted cultural group but the Muslims did not get amalgamated. They adopted many customs and conventions but they retained their separate Muslims identity" (39).

Thus those studies which place the shape and nature of Islamic religious identity squarely at the centre of debate are likely to be those which provide the springboard for future study of the community.

Almost necessarily, no definitive account of identity for Britain's Muslims exists to date...the whole matter is still in its infancy, and studies such as this can only provide building blocks with which to pave the academic road ahead. The work that has largely been done so far has charted the upheavals upon identity due to migration, and the consequences of this for succeeding generations. Religion has come out as a foundation upon which *Muslims themselves* wish to build their identity. It remains in the hands of later academics - both Muslim and non-Muslim - to chart the progress. The role of the latter will remain important, acting as they are like symbolic 'mirrors' reflecting back to the community some of the changes and developments that are taking place.

In studying the migration experience and its effects on later generations, this study is part of a much broader range of scholarship that exists both within and beyond the parameters of 'Religious Studies'. Whether from the perspective of human geography, or sociology of religion (such as Will Herberg's work), the movement of peoples has been a constant theme of life. Any study that examines the impact of a new location on a group of people contributes to an understanding of both generalities and particularities bound up with the subject of migration. This thesis has examined the specific impact of migration on Muslims, especially those from the Asian sub-continent, to a secular, liberal, material Western society; and it is their differing self-perceptions across the generations, particularly where religion is bound up with this, that has been of special interest.

In studying these differing patterns of identity, as far as possible a balance needs to be struck. This balance rests upon the self-understanding and identity of the community, as against the reflections of those who stand on the boundary of it, looking in. But this distinction perhaps over-simplifies the 'neutrality verses commitment' dichotomy that runs through Religious Studies debate. Those engaged in any kind of analysis of a religious community, whether 'insiders' or 'outsiders', bring their own lenses through which reality is either distorted or focussed. *Knowing* the lens one is using is perhaps half the battle. In this study, a view of a religious community, and one generation of it in particular, has come into shape. At times there has been a reliance on the perspective of other academics; and at other times, and as far as possible, every effort has been made to let the voice of the young themselves be heard.

Occasionally, everyone is perhaps an outsider to their own community, orbiting around it when the contours of its existence no longer fit the pattern of life chosen by the individual. On other occasions, so-called 'outsiders' can enter a way of life previously closed to strangers and they bring to it their fresh perspectives. There are therefore a whole range of possible stances from which to approach a subject for which the simplistic distinction between 'neutrality' or

'commitment' seems inadequate. Rather than wishing to be looking at British Muslims from another viewpoint, the legitimacy of *this* one has been affirmed: one that takes in the impressions and experiences of others, of the researcher herself, and the well-documented opinions of countless academics. Out of this juggling act, it is hoped that the aimed-for balance between 'insider' information and 'outside' observation and analysis has been achieved. And perhaps the only qualification that affirms the authenticity of this research is the concern for an understanding of identity and religious identity among a young generation, of whom the researcher is one, growing up in a modern Western society. Though there may be a gulf separating the experiences, background, and variables on identity of third generation British Muslims and those young academics who are trying to understand them (40), they have shared the experience, to some extent, of growing up amid the situational peculiarities, fashions, and trends that have characterized the past twenty years. Identity is a matter in which most have some stake in the debate.

It seems that concern with questions of identity is a particularly twentieth century interest. Why should this be? The answer seems to lie in the very phenomenon of modern life itself which imposes upon most of its inhabitants a constant flow of information, persuasions, fashions, messages. During the life-course of an individual today, it is perhaps harder to locate any sense of "personal sameness" (41) compared to the time in which William James was writing. There is so much that beckons for our attention, diverting the consciousness into new possibilities for interests and learning.

"It is terms such as contradiction, fluidity, multiplicity which come most readily to mind when conceptualizing the contemporary experience of modernity...(C)ontemporary culture represents a rupture with the past, throwing previous assumptions to the wind, undermining accepted ideas and modes of relationship between people and people, and between people and things. Marx's phrase, 'all that is solid melts into air'...is partly an expression of personal experience...(and) (t)he real turmoil in the outside world is mirrored internally as it must be if there is any link between the two orders. Modern states of mind and forms of selfhood, then, are forged in the context of instability of a cataclysmic kind. This marks them with their own internal instabilities, opening the

way both to pathologically defensive states and to a fluid and generative creativity" (42).

Communities are now more fluid aspects of social life in the modern West as individuals can leave them as easily as they enter them. Ethnic communities are perhaps the last bastions of tight-knit social groups. But with the imminent prospect of young Muslims choosing to live separately from structured family networks (but not necessarily leaving the community at large), so the prospect for the partial break-up of these neighbourhoods over the future decades seems inevitable. Religion seems to offer to many a safety-rope, a lifeline which prevents them from becoming drowned by the sheer volume of *choice* that modern life offers. The rise in evangelical forms of religion in many parts of the world seems to indicate a need, felt by many, to belong to something which offers meaning, community, continuity, and above all, identity. The concern then of young Muslims is perhaps part of a much wider historical human development.

It is as if each person is trying to find some link with an enduring and eternal quality of life which will offset the constantly changing nature of modern existence. In Islamic theology, the *ruh* or spirit of Allah within the individual provides the connection, consciously or not. But for many young Muslims, there does appear to be a greater awareness of such theology. Unlike many of their grandparents particularly, they have the *language* with which to construct, and answer to some extent, the questions that modernity imposes upon the self. Within three generations the whole issue of identity and 'who are we?' is being debated in a way that would have sounded quite unfamiliar in many cases to the elder members of the Muslim community. And so in some ways, the perplexity of young Muslims with questions of identity represents in microcosm a process of human self-understanding that is going on at a much broader level.

"Modern life is characterized by a dynamic tension between excitement and terror, between the thrills produced by exposure to rapid change and the rootlessness which comes when nothing stays the same. Each one of us, as individual 'subjects of modernity', struggles to come to terms with and resolve the tension. Usually, we try to do this by constructing a stable self which can make sense of and integrate the various forces

impinging on us - forces which, because of their fragmenting nature, always seem to have the power to tear us apart" (43).

By migrating to the West, immigrants set off a process whereby their succeeding generations would add another dimension to the whole issue of Islam and modernity. It is not just young Western Muslims who are caught up in a process of self-understanding; it is the faith itself which is also trying to answer the questions of its adherents in a particular phase of human history. The identity of the religion is thus a part of the dynamic: what particular 'safety-rope' for religious identity does it offer to its twentieth century followers, and how strong are the threads? These are questions for others, though this research may be a small contribution...

Identity has been the underpinning concept behind the discussion and analysis that the preceding pages have offered. What began with investigation into the work of William James, Erik Erikson, and others, should perhaps be brought to a close with the comments of a current psychologist on the subject. Now is perhaps a timely moment to re-focus on what is meant by identity in relation to the experiences of some members of a generation of British Muslims; it is at this point that the weight of all that has gone before can shape our reading.

"The successful construction of a stable self depends on the fragile existence of certain supportive conditions; these conditions are interpersonal ones, themselves dependent to some degree on wider social circumstances. Therefore, any culturally pervasive pattern of selfhood can be seen as a kind of barometer of social processes, reflecting the quality of environmental conditions. Put more strongly, as the relative stability and integrity of the self is taken to be a product of the individual's history, in particular the quality of the relationships in which she or he has been embedded, then if there are common characteristics of selfhood amongst members of any particular social group, it may be possible to use these as indicators of the overall quality of experience available in that group" (44).

Not only this, these indicators also reflect something of the society of which particular groups are a part. It is left for those individuals and groups to find their way through the dark uncertainties of

modern life out of which a stable identity may be constructed. Religion appears to be offering some light on the confusion. It is being used as fundamental pieces of the 'jigsaw' picture of the self that individuals construct in order to define themselves. For some it offers those pieces without which the jigsaw would make little sense; for others it is part of the background in that on-going process of picture-building.

As much as being a study of identity and religious identity in their own right, this thesis has also tried to examine how modern life and its accompanying ideologies impinge upon them. The situation of Muslim youth in Britain has provided a context in which to examine these questions. But young Muslims are not the only one's caught up in the dilemmas of being modern.

"To be modern is to find ourselves in an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world - and, at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are...(Modernity) pours us all into a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish" (45).

There are perhaps few people who have not been touched by these aspects of modernity which push and pull on their sense of identity. The exception perhaps are those members of the first generation of Muslim immigrants, and perhaps women in particular, who while in Britain have lived in 'transplanted worlds' based upon their lives before migration. Thus a study of the generation(s) that have succeeded them can reveal much about broad issues of identity and the place of religion in modern life.

For future studies of young Muslims in Britain, their wish to define themselves on the basis of their religious identity must be fully realized. This emerging trend has been hinted at by other scholars (46), but now these calls can be fully appreciated through the research of this thesis which has attempted to give a thorough underpinning to the concept of identity and religious identity in relation to Muslims in Britain. It is with this group in mind that the theories of Erik Erikson and Hans Mol in particular have been

explored. They are two scholars that provide a conceptual background to the research, and their scholarship offers a language with which to describe some of the trends and emerging patterns of British Islam.

Given the rapidity of change which characterizes modern life, it is perhaps surprising, and yet fortunate, that elements of human life seem to remain as enduring concerns. The need, consciously or not, to feel a sense of 'belonging' to a community or a sense of self-worth have been features of life since time immemorial. This is why the scholarship of Erikson, Mol and others are likely to continue serving the interests of those with a concern on identity issues. Much of their work has a timelessness quality to it. A study such as this has simply taken up and studied in a particular context one aspect of religion and identity on which others may later build their research; similarly, this research has 'borrowed' from the investigations of others in an attempt to advance an understanding of identity. In many ways the particular situational context which has provided the focus is only a snapshot of a stage of community development. But from it some of those enduring aspects of human concern with identity may be drawn and re-examined.

It seems appropriate given the early theoretical dependence of this research on the work of Hans Mol that the last word should go to him. Given that the previous pages have discussed some of the issues that arise in relation to identity and modernity, it is worth citing afresh Mol's comment on how *change* can affect the sacralizing of identity...

"Sometimes personal and social identity were too well sacralized, with the result that cultures become extinct when mechanisms for adaptation had become atrophied. At other times, such as our own, there are many complaints that there is too much change and that there are no traditions left to give continuity to one's identity" (47).

It is the young generation of British Muslims who are in a position to develop "mechanisms for adaptation" from which they can take the best of all to which they are inheritors, while contributing and taking part in modern life. As a legacy of the migration of their

parents and grandparents, they are placed in a social setting which enables new understandings of where Islam can contribute to the sacralizing of identity. They draw upon a precarious balance between what is old and new; reaction and innovation. But in many ways the whole of Islam rests upon balance or *wasat*, particularly when this touches on the relationship between this world and the next...

Notes for Chapter Six - Conclusion

(1) A. Brittan, *Meanings and Situations*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973, cited in Kwen Fee Lian, Identity in Minority Group Relations, in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol.5.1, Jan.1982.

(2) *ibid.*

(3) The study was discussed by Tariq Modood at a meeting of the 'Muslims in Britain Network' at C.S.I.C., Selly Oak Colleges, 14/5/94. It is to be published early in 1995.

(4) Kwen Fee Lian, Identity in Minority Group Relations, in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol.5.1, Jan.1982.

(5) Reference to A. Epstein's *Ethos and Identity*, (London: Tavistock, 1978, p99-102) in Kwen Fee Lian, *op.*, *cit.*, p48.

(6) 'Q News' 8-15th April, 1994.

(7) see page 8.

(8) *ibid.*

(9) see page 8.

(10) Cyril Glasse (ed), *The Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam*, London: Stacey International, 1989, p353 'Schools of Law'.

(11) see page 14.

(12) *ibid.*

(13) see page 51.

(14) see note 45, Chapter Five.

(15) see page 96.

(16) Kenneth Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, London: Collins, 1985, p106.

(17) *ibid* & p111.

(18) see Appendix Two, p333; report of F.A. who felt like a "misfit" in Britain.

(19) see '*Trends*' vol.5.4, p31 in which Mahmud al-Rashid writes "we in the Young Muslims (are) part of the global Islamic Movement".

(20) James Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*, New York: Harper Collins, 1981, p76.

(21) see page 198-9.

(22) James Fowler, *op. cit.*, p19

(23) *ibid.*

(24) *ibid.*, p21.

(25) see page 232-3

(26) see '*Q News*', 27th August 1993.

(27) *ibid.*

(28) Tariq Modood, On Not Being White in Britain: Discrimination, Diversity and Commonality, in M. Leicester & M. Taylor (eds), *Ethics, Ethnicity and Education*, London: Kegan Paul, 1992, p78.

(29) James Fowler, *op. cit.*, p172.

(30) *ibid.*, p177.

(31) see page 161.

(32) see for example p182, note 22 & p183 note 24.

(33) Ernest Gellner, *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion*, London: Routledge, 1992, p3.

(34) see note 67, p164.

(35) see for example note 5, p175 or note 17, p180.

(36) see page 175, note 5.

(37) see page 5, note 13.

(38) such as Tariq Modood, or Muhammad Anwar.

(39) Editorial, *Muslim Educational Quarterly*, Cambridge: The Islamic Academy, Winter 1986, vol.3.2.

(40) A range of other research projects are currently underway by other young academics, Muslim and non-Muslim, on identity issues brought about by ethnicity and religion.

(41) see note 10, Chapter One.

(42) Stephen Frosh, *Identity Crisis: Modernity, Psychoanalysis and the Self*, London: MacMillan, 1991, p6-7.

(43) *ibid*, backcover.

(44) *ibid.*, p4-5.

(45) *ibid*, p15, citing M. Berman, *All That is Solid Melts into Air*, London: Verso, 1983, p15.

(46) for example see p3, note 6.

(47) Hans Mol, *Identity and the Sacred*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1976, p9.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE
RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE AND
INTERVIEW REPORTS
(LONDON AND BRADFORD)

FIELDWORK QUESTIONNAIRE - 1

- 1) How do you feel about the presence of other faiths in Britain? Is it something you view as positive or negative?
- 2) How do you see the Muslim community adapting to the context of religious pluralism?
- 3) What steps should be taken so that Muslims retain their sense of religious identity amid the other faiths in Britain?
- 4) How does the sense of being 'different' from Christians, Hindus, and so on, affect your own personal identity as a Muslim?
- 5) Which sections of the Muslim community are most aware of religious pluralism?
- 6) Is it important, in your opinion, for Muslims to engage in dialogue with other faiths? Could 'interfaith dialogue' affect a Muslim's sense of religious identity?
- 7) Do you think that the existence of other faiths in Britain is a cause for concern at grass-root level within the Muslim community?
- 8) What difference does it make to you that Islam is not only situated within a context of pluralism, but is also a minority faith?
- 9) Do you have to re-interpret any aspect of Islam given your situation in Britain?
- 10) Do you think that there has been a change of attitude among Muslims with regard to religious pluralism over the last twenty years?
- 11) What advice would you give to a young Muslim coming to terms with 'other faiths'?
- 12) What impact do you think that secularism is having on Britain's Muslim community?

FIELDWORK REPORTS

It was decided that in the interests of a free-flowing relaxed meeting, interviews conducted for the research should not be recorded on a tape-recorder. Since the subject of 'identity' is for many a highly personal topic, a tape-recorder may have inhibited responses. Similarly, the area of research touches upon various 'hot' issues for the British Muslim community, and interviewees may have been less forthcoming had the meetings been recorded. As an alternative, the author took notes during the course of the interviews. These were then written up at the end of each day; particular phrases which bore a direct relationship to the research were recorded precisely, and as far as possible the minimum number of words on the part of the researcher have been used to give meaning to the opinions and ideas expressed by the interviewees. The style of what follows inevitably reflects this.

The period of fieldwork began in London on Monday 29th March 1993. It was fortunate that on the same day as the project began, a BBC programme on the Muslim community was shown. This programme was often mentioned during the course of interviews that took place over the next two-and-a-half weeks. For this reason, it is worth briefly citing some of the main issues raised by the programme.

The programme was part of the 'Panorama' series and it was called "An Underclass in Purdah". It focussed upon the problems of some Bradford communities (drugs, prostitution etc.) especially in the Manningham area. It noted how some Muslims in Bradford are keeping up financial ties with Pakistan, and marriages between the two countries still occur. The concept of *izzat*/honour, it was reported, means little to many of the Muslim youth in Bradford...many are caught up in crime. Communities are "fraying around the edges", due to "religious persecution" and Islamic practice is under threat.

Many young Muslims go to school with little or no English, and some of their parents still live with the 'myth of return'. They take their children on long holidays to Pakistan...often when they are young, so that they gain some concept of their roots. The children's education

suffers drastically, and some of the teachers interviewed on the programme felt a sense of despair with the attitudes of some Muslim parents. Because of educational problems, many young Muslims are unemployed...an underclass. They are not participating in British life.

The impression the programme gave was depressing. Some of the Muslim interviewees, after twenty years in Britain, still could not speak English (only trading or dealing with their own communities), and their interview needed subtitling. Many of them appeared to be living in a ghetto.

Interview One

The first appointment of the day (30/3/93) was with Z.B. Initially the conversation was fairly general, and revolved around various issues concerning Islam in Britain eg. some of the Muslim media. He said he found the "level of failure in the Muslim community depressing"...as we discussed the important Panorama programme last night. He suggested that the Muslim community somewhere had got its priorities wrong..."too many fancy mosques...not enough schools".

After some general comments, the questionnaire provided the structure to the interview. "Islam grew in pluralism"...The Prophet accepted plurality. Z.B. himself noted his own upbringing in an atmosphere of tolerance, debate and new ideas. He said he had been very interested in Christian theological debates and the work of John Robinson, Tillich, and so on. To him, Britain is in some sense a Muslim state in that it allows Muslims to perform their faith unhampered. He suggested that some young Muslims do have problems in relating to other faiths, especially in R.E. classes where the teacher may be trying to "indoctrinate a faith rather than instruct in religion".

He felt that Muslims in Britain are not a community..."just a collection of groups from different countries". Where they fail in this country, the lack of education in the community is to blame. The immigrants to Britain 20/30 years ago were fearful of the West, and they had

little knowledge. "Village attitudes resulted in a static British community" that has not been induced into society generally. This group of people (first generation immigrants) are unaware of plurality, simply seeing the outside world as a frightening threat..especially to the daughters of the community. They are feeling the threat to identity of secularism. Isolationist attitudes are for those who want a "little Pakistan in Britain"...living in separate areas, with segregated schools.

More educated Muslims are trying to tackle issues of plurality..those who are in business etc. with non-Muslims. Muslim students may be the exception...they are influenced by *Jamaat-i-Islami*, and tend to keep to themselves in university. But the "world is too small for ghettos". They avoid questioning Islam, and are very simplistic in their attitudes. Rather than discussion of core issues of religious identity, they focus merely on "outward manifestations of identity" , eg. beards. There is perhaps a group of third generation Muslims who are the "spearhead of a movement", trying to tackle questions of identity and plurality, but numbers are so far small.

The future of Muslims in dialogue depends on the attitudes of the majority community. It must be non-missionary. Also, it depends on the growth of self-confidence of Muslims...at present many cannot talk confidently and with certainty. Muslims can engage in dialogue at several levels..intellectually, and at the level of common, practical objectives. But 'Islamophobia' (a term used in the Panorama programme) is shaking the confidence of Muslim youth. Those who are educated, and fully adept in English (language imbibes a culture), are taking in the pluralism that it carries.

Muslims have not developed a "theory of being a minority". They are living as Muslims without a theoretical basis. He felt that not many Muslims are studying other religions. Those publications produced from the Islamic world in English are not often helpful, and they tend to be polemical. They are not then able to accept and view Islam in a broad sense, and accept its differences to other faiths. Too many Muslims are reading literature which demeans the West and they end up daydreaming about their situation. Important for

Muslims to see Islam's spiritual significance, and "not get caught up in its cultural vehicle". To retain identity means isolation for those who feel threatened eg. in universities.

In the future the community will adapt, principally through the "changing role of women". The family will become closer to the ideals of Islam, and more functional for its Western setting. More women will work, carry authority, and this will transform the community. (He kept referring to the "majority community" as if it were a unified group...it struck me as strange since the very topic we were discussing was diversity and plurality).

Interview Two

The second interview of the day (30/3/93) was with S.D. He came to the U.K. in 1962 to study, then after a brief time abroad, returned to Britain to serve the community.

He began by noting some Qur'anic chapters that refer to pluralism (2v256; 10v99; 29v46) in attempt to show me that Islam is not new to pluralism. But secularism the real challenge to Muslims...worldwide. He felt that religious pluralism was not a significant issue.

He emphasized a need to develop a minority *fiqh*. Many immigrants were illiterate, and had no capability for intellectual progress in this area. But it is important to remember that the experience of Islam in Britain on a large scale is short. The early challenge to the community was about adjusting socially, moving from a developing to a developed country, preserving Islam, and plus contributing to society. But intellectual development is now needed.

Regarding the Panorama programme...he felt that the programme was not entirely representative...it focussed on one particular community only. He pointed out that many Muslims are going to university...contrary to the programme's impression. And although the odds are great, there are signs of development in the appreciation and articulation of Islam. He noted the lack of leadership in the Muslim community in the 1960's/1970's...few Islamic

scholars, and the few around were not relating to the wider Muslim community.

The future of the Muslim community in Britain depends on building Islamic institutions...schools, cultural centres etc. It is also important that middle class Muslims do not move away from Muslim communities...their children will be deprived in not being able to mix with other Muslims. Muslim children need to understand (through Muslim schools) why they are Muslim, and how they can be proud of their faith.

Pluralism can affect identity positively..reinforcing the need to read the Qur'an, socialize with other Muslims, and avoid the *haram* elements of society. But in a negative light, many Muslims feel barred from many aspects of Western life and may fall prey to its attractions if they do not have a strong code of life. They may feel "dictated to by the norm" ie. the majority/secular values. They are then in a vulnerable position to the activities of Christian missionaries who take advantage of their religious insecurity.

Muslim youth are trying to discover their identity, and they are concentrating not on other faiths, but what they have as Muslims. They are "questioning traditional practices", trying to find out Islamic teaching on questions of arranged marriages for example.

Interfaith dialogue is important to dispel misconceptions, and to show Islam's co-operative attitudes. How are religious leaders contributing and answering the questions of the young? Popular preachers such as Ahmed Deedat simply give a psychological boost and assurances about other faiths to an insecure community. This he felt is not good for community development.

With regard to the future the voice of Islam is more likely to be heard, and more mosques will appear. The community may become more self-assured, less threatened in speaking about itself. There will be a realization that Muslims pose no threat to the identity of Britain. But at the moment, Muslims are still exploring themselves.

Interview Three

Today's interview (31/3/93) was with M.Y. He began by talking about himself...He sees himself as a "pioneer", "agenda-setter", and "co-ordinator of the Muslim community" in Britain. He is involved with the development of anti-racist, and multi-cultural policies that take into account the pluralism of British society.

Essentially, British society has failed the Muslim community...socially, economically, as well as in terms of religious identity. At the private level, the dominant culture allowed the building of mosques...a very private Muslim activity; but it has not shown justice and equality in meeting public demand for Muslim schools. Surplus places in Council schools are surplus to Muslim needs. Thus Muslims are challenging models of assimilation. Fear on the part of the dominant culture that Muslims are 'not like us'. This he said is all this bound up with questions of ideology, power and money.

Islam and Muslims are seen as 'other' or alien by the rest of society. This affects the attitude and behaviour of the majority culture. As a result, Muslims become more aware of group identity...it is heightened in such a climate. One of M.Y.'s aims is to develop community consciousness...something not yet a reality in a group-orientated Muslim presence in Britain. He is trying to "develop a consensus on a British Muslim identity". But there are two problems to be faced: one is external, the other internal. Externally, Muslims face intolerance by the majority of the population. But within the community, there must be a "separation of the notions of religion and culture"...a resolution of the tension between "Islamicity and ethnicity". There must be a new developing British Muslim identity. As a minority, Muslims must try to overcome discrimination, and try to feel that they belong to society. This means working through various psychological hang-up's. It is a difficult and painful process. The hostility towards Muslims in Britain militates against the development of feelings of belonging.

There also arises the question of what Islamic identity to present to the wider society. Whose version? A Pakistani Islam? This latter

stance was the trend among first generation immigrants, and in turn this was internalized by the second generation. But the latter also had the experiences of the wider, British society. So they are in a better position to work out the equation between Islam, Britain (dominant society and values), and ethnic culture. At present, there is confusion between these. To further the process, there must be a re-working conceptually between factors of faith, nationhood and ethnicity in terms of the cultural baggage of racial/cultural traits, dress, diet etc. There should not be a mass rejection of any one of these in order to develop a British Muslim identity. But Muslim leaders must be prepared to root the changes in the medium of English.

Must be an understanding of common values of decency, equality etc. between Muslims and the majority culture...A recognition by the latter that Muslims 'want to belong' as Muslims. These two must not be seen as incompatible. There is a fermentation process at work within both the Muslim and majority population on questions of identity. For the latter, pluralism and race accentuates the issue. There are problems facing the Muslim community, especially racial and religious discrimination. In his opinion, some Muslim leaders have distanced themselves from the race question.

The Panorama programme revealed something real and important, and the programme was a realistic reflection of the situation of many Muslims in inner city areas to a greater or lesser extent in his opinion. It showed that on average, reading ability for a thirteen year old is at the level of a nine year old. Part of the problem, he suggested, was that there were not enough Muslim/bilingual teachers, especially at primary level.

Many of the problems of the Muslim community stem from the ignorance and semi-literacy (even in their own language) of the first immigrants. They are still living in a "time warp", and isolation was a security strategy. Many still do not see themselves as British. They think they are doing well in Britain compared to their relatives back home. The second generations do not have a group to compare themselves to.

Muslims are "still trying to create a space for themselves in Britain". Pluralism means secularism too, and therefore there must be a broad definition of pluralism that includes religious pluralism and various lifestyles, plus the secular element that comes with plurality. Muslims in a plural context do question their assumptions.

The interview with M.Y. was very useful. He made me think about widening my definition of religious pluralism...to include plurality at social and ideological levels.

Interview Four

Today's interview (1/4/93) was with W.A. from the Muslim Women's Helpline. We started by having a general talk about the role and demand made of the service. It seems that the helpline has very good relations with secular organizations, such as Social Services, Police etc. It has build up some of the alliances that M.Y. was speaking of yesterday. The service is used by some Sikh women, as well as white/non-Muslim women who may have Muslim husbands.

We talked of the identity differences in the Muslim community...largely determined by age. The younger generations are psychologically "here", where as some of the older members of the community are not. Differences in attitudes can lead to conflicts, anger with parents, and questions such as "who am I".

The young are in a difficult position...not fitting completely into British society being of a different colour, nor being completely acceptable to their families who see them as "contaminated" by the Western society. Out of this dilemma must be the development of an Islamic identity. When the cultural aspect of identity has been dealt with, the religious identity can stabilize. Upbringing is important in the development of a stable religious identity...a family who have studied the Qur'an seriously are likely to have a firm identity in the face of plurality. Those with weaker identities are more likely to question things. But relationships with those of other faiths may in

fact help Muslims to find their Islamic identity. But for this they need knowledge.

In trying to find one's identity, there can be extremism. Most young people are moderate, but there are temptations from the wider society which may weaken identity. Thus Islamic friends, positive views of oneself as a Muslim, and in Allah, are important. Pluralism can be positive in making a Muslim appreciate their Islam more.

The new generation must participate in society. It is time to get rid of un-Islamic/foreign customs. The young can do this, bridging the gap between East and West. Any interfaith dialogue that takes place must have positive outcomes. Endless conferences etc. are useless unless something comes of them.

Secularism can pose a threat to the search for an Islamic identity...it can make one struggle positively, or one may give up Islam. With regard to interpreting Islam to fit into this society there are no major themes emerging, but smaller things like dress, marriage are being questioned. But the short history of Islam in Britain means that these things are only just starting to be worked out.

Interview Five

The first interview of the day (2/4/93) was with A.V. He has been in Britain since 1967, and is involved with the Harrow Muslim community. Coming originally from a plural society, he finds no problem with being in a multi-faith society. He felt that Muslims are not really concerned in Britain with religious pluralism, "except when evangelical Christians try to convert them"!

Muslims in Britain face secular distractions...and a variety of problems that they would not encounter in a Muslim country. There is also "not a strong community feeling". To overcome the problems, Muslims must fight for their rights. Identity is not an issue in a Muslim country in his opinion.

The Rushdie affair brought out a "re-affirmation of Islam among some Muslims" and subsequently the Gulf crisis. These things make Muslims think about values (these are a source for identity), and the young in particular. He said that many young Muslims are taking their Islam more seriously since these events. It would seem that crisis strengthens belief in some cases. Also, young Muslims have seen the failure of nationalism, Arabism etc. as political ideologies, and have turned consequently towards Islamic solutions. "Religious revival is a way of finding roots".

He mentioned that the Panorama programme twisted the figures from the Policy Studies Institute report. Also, apparently the film crew also visited the Muslim Girls School in Bradford...but it was not shown in the programme, nor the success of the venture.

Being in a plural context can make Muslims attempt to find out more precisely their relationship with the 'people of the book'. In a non-Muslim country, there can be difficulties at prayer time, especially in winter...the whole society is not stopping for *salat*. Many Muslims would rather leave their employment if there were problems with prayer, he suggested.

As an indication of a change in cultural focus, he mentioned that fewer Pakistanis are sending the bodies of their dead back to Pakistan. Also, there is more inter-racial marriage taking place in this country than there used to be. He echoed a prominent theme of the fieldwork so far...that there must be a shedding of non-Islamic practices in order to find a pure Islam.

Interview Six

Today (5/4/93) I went to see Dr. G. in central London. We began with a very general talk about Islam in Britain. He felt that despite the diversity of the community, it was right that it could be called a 'community' given that all Muslims share an Islamic faith. He felt that some of my questions were too presumptuous. For example, some of them may suggest that I feel Islam is hostile to pluralism. (This I do not feel to be true, but his comment was nonetheless valuable).

Like nearly all the Muslims I have talked to on this trip, they have emphasized the early history of Islam, and its growth in a climate of pluralism.

To retain their identity in Britain, Muslims must maintain their institutions, awareness of their history and connections with the past, and they must "abandon their inferiority complex". Dr. G. said he was proud of his difference, as a Muslim, from the majority/host community. Contact with other faiths strengthens his Islam, he said. Again, he echoed others in suggesting that the more educated Muslim who is aware of religious pluralism.

He felt that interfaith dialogue is important, since the aim is not a "melting pot" for religions. It is thus unlikely to weaken identity. He felt that pluralism does not have much effect on identity for Muslims, but non-faith on the part of the host community, and racism does have an effect. He suggested that the majority population is not open to cultural pluralism, wanting the non-white community to adapt, become 'British', and fit the mould. Under this pressure, Muslims may give up their faith, become more fervent, or question their identity. In the face of secularism, he feels that Islam is losing numbers more than gaining.

With regard to the Panorama programme, he felt that it perhaps brought out too many negative aspects of the Muslim community...they could have shown something positive! He finished by saying how much of a need there was for factual, sympathetic study of Islam.

Interview Seven

My first appointment today (6/4/93) was with A.H. who is involved with the Muslim women's helpline, and other Islamic counselling. She is a professional psychologist. (She had not been originally chosen as one of my interviewee's, but after my visit to the Muslim Women's Helpline, it was suggested to me that I contacted her. This turned out to be a very useful introduction).

I showed her the questionnaire that I had been using for the interviews. She began by saying that the education of women is a critical issue from her point of view. The whole of society rests on it. Since mothers educate the future generations, it is essential that they are knowledgeable. Muslim men who resent or prevent educating women illustrate the difference between Islam and Muslims! As a psychologist, she was able to give me some interesting insights into the issue of identity. For example, I had not really considered before how the normal adolescent period of questioning identity might affect a young Muslim.

Teen years are one's of natural questioning of identity. As most Muslims are in a school environment, the religion of Islam is likely to be questioned and challenged. Everyone needs to feel they are doing the right thing in life, to be able to justify their life-course. In a plural society, it may be harder to do this. The young *feel* their difference as Muslims in school, and at that age, young people don't want to feel they are going against the grain of youth trends. Peer pressure to conform to certain norms (which may well be un-Islamic) may threaten identity.

For her, the best Muslims are in the world, not of it. The threat of pluralism to a Muslim might be doubt (self-doubt, religious doubts), or, temptation to follow the ways of the world. The latter is especially possible if one is not sound in knowledge about Islam. A.H. thought of Islam as a "life-transaction" (with Allah) of beliefs and behaviour. Strong *'ilm* can protect this transaction against secular ideological pluralism.

The good Muslim is in a dilemma. They cannot really be proud of Islam in this country or of their identity as a Muslim, since Islam is not justified by social life in Britain. Some Muslims may attempt to copy the majority community. In the identity of many Muslims there is a sense of "tornness". They are divided inwardly between two lives at home and in society. The juxtaposition of these two can make a Muslim who has not integrated religious/home life with social interaction in the wider society, feel hypocritical. Those from loving religious backgrounds are less likely to have such a dilemma.

A.H. pointed out an interesting phenomenon. Even perhaps the most 'accepted' Muslims into British life at the end of the day choose to make certain 'Islamic' decisions. For example, Imran Khan is widely popular as a cricket player, a good-looking man who could choose any wife, and yet when it came to marriage, he chose to marry a Muslim woman. She felt that "marriage choices are significant indicators of inner identity". They are a way of going "back to one's roots". Marrying a Muslim, and raising one's children as Muslim, is a pattern that is evident among young Muslims who may appear secularized.

She noted the very big differences between the Muslims who migrated here after World War One and those who arrived in Britain in the post-World War Two period. The first group tended to merge into the middle class, and lose their inner Islamic identity. This is in stark contrast to the second group of immigrants. The children of this group see their parents not really practicing Islam, but a whole "gamut of cultural traditions". In more deprived areas this can lead to ghetto mentality, and a weakening of identity among the young. As a response the youth may be prompted by the behaviour of their parents to re-awaken to their own Islamic identity.

One of the most significant comments A.H. made regarding pluralism was that for a Muslim in such a context, "their identity will not be reflected back at them from the reality outside themselves". It will be communicating a different message. Everyone needs to feel pride and dignity in their identity. It can be hard to do this in a non-Muslim country. It can be discomfoting. The manifestations of Muslim identity...hijab etc. are important in a non-Muslim society for remaining aware of who one is. It was clear from our conversation that she felt that the more educated a person is, the more one can be a true Muslim, less caught up in cultural trappings of religion.

Interview Eight

The second appointment of the day (6/4/93) took place over dinner in the evening at the home of M.al-R. and his wife S.J. M.al-R. has been educated in the West, and is now working in the field of law.

For him, the pluralistic situation of Britain is something that he would have no other way. Difference is a natural human phenomenon. The differences between two people extends outwards to differences between faiths. He felt happier living in British society, which recognises pluralism, than he would be in an Islamic country...many of them are "totalitarian, unsophisticated, and way behind the West in terms of cultural advancement".

Islam is adapting to British society...particularly culturally. The development of "a British Muslim identity is being evolved", and is partially evident, but it has not really got any solid theoretical foundations yet. To retain their identity, Muslims must first understand Islam. "Many are attached to their faith emotionally, not intellectually". Secondly, they must understand the society around them...its principles, fundamentals etc.. Where these contradict Islam, they must make an effort to change these principles into one's of Islam.

Society is overwhelmingly orientated around the majority...but Muslims have to interact with it. But for M.al-R., Islam is the best way to live on earth..so he naturally wants to give the best to society, his family etc., so will campaign and promote Islam. He pointed out that above all, humans, though different from each other in terms of faith etc., share some common things...the need for love, security etc. Problems for Muslims may arise when people of extreme views become fanatical and try to impose their ideas on others. Some don't realize the value of human differences. Nor do they understand the dynamics of change and development.

He felt that there was awareness of pluralism through all sections of the Muslim community, and a variety of responses to it. He suggested that the key issues was the location of education, whether it has been here or abroad. Those from abroad are likely to show stagnated, unintellectual views of plurality. For them then, living in Britain is difficult. They live in ghettos, only identifying with people of like-mind. They are frightened of non-Islamic values...the Rushdie affair highlighted this fright.

M.al-R. felt he was not perhaps representative of educated Muslims even. He has remained traditional about many things, and is yet extremely liberal on other matters. He holds to some central, key beliefs...which he has never found better alternatives to. There has been nothing to convince him against *tawhid*. But there is no reason to wear Pakistani clothes here. For him, some of the problems of living in the West, are that he cannot share many of the values of society, nor its material, non-spiritual ethos. He feel that the West is losing basic human values, selling out to a laissez-faire attitude. This must be stopped. So the problems for a Muslim of being in Britain, are social problems in the wider society too. One can either lose out to these values, or stand by one's religious principles.

For him, the future of Islam in Britain depends on the dynamics between Muslims and non-Muslims. It is not a worry for him personally. He sees the need for synthesis and development...the outworking of the essence of Islam in building personalities and societies. Changes at the macro level affect things at the micro level. Muslims, other groups, society, etc., are all going in the same direction (he used a train metaphor). The driving values affect us all. So "Muslim" issues are less important than "society" matters. The drugs, prostitution and so on that the Panorama programme highlighted amongst Muslims, are problems throughout the whole of society.

It was a useful discussion. At dinner, his wife and I continued with some of the things M.al-R. and I had talked of. She is a convert (from Catholicism). She is currently doing a Religious Studies degree at King's College, London. She has found studying Islam, and 'religiousness' challenging. At first, it was difficult, but in the end she feels her Islam is stronger.

After the interviews in London, fieldwork was then undertaken in Bradford.

Interview Nine

The first appointment was on Saturday 10th April with P.H., who is closely involved with interfaith work in Bradford, and has strong contacts with the Muslim community.

He felt that locally, Muslims have come to terms with interaction with institutions. They have learnt how to play the local system. But *national* Muslim groups are emerging (reflecting Muslim concerns to make political allies?), simply out of necessity. His concern was, "where will they find the intellectual resources to meet the challenges?" There seem to be very few educated Muslims going on to do research in Islam.

He told me of the gender problem in Bradford...many women work out of economic necessity, but this can cause religious difficulties. He said that there were no facilities for educated Muslim women. We both were aware of the kind of reading material that many Muslim bookshops hold, which explains the persistence of backward ideas. Much of it is from Pakistan or India, and much of it is adversarial against the West. Islamic literature he said was either "apologetic or polemical". This, he suggested, said something about pluralism.

Thinking about religious pluralism is a luxury few Muslims can afford in Britain. They are more concerned with living as a minority, and utilizing their resources. Islam has different priorities compared to, say, Christianity, where the issue of pluralism is at the top of the agenda.

An important task for Muslims is to understand the West. This means understanding Christianity, and its influence in institutions. Many Muslims think of Britain, say, as a purely secular country. This is an easier conceptualization since it reduces relations to the simply formula: Islam vs. *jahilia*. This does not really raise a religious problem.

Another important question to answer is whether Muslims recognise pluralism within their own tradition? Unless it is realized, then there are little hopes for inter-faith dialogue. Is there an urge towards

ecumenism within Islam, especially on the part of the young? But who can deliver this. Are there the resources?

He showed me a letter that he has written to the BBC about the Panorama programme. Basically it said how much sadness, regret etc. was felt as a result of the programme.

After the interview with P.H., I spent some time in the Manningham area. It's like a little Pakistan in Britain. Many of the shop signs are in Urdu/English, and many posters inside them are in Urdu alone. Many sell the usual wares...Makkah wall clocks, prayer mats, and Islamic posters amongst other things. I was surprised to see even young children dressed up in Pakistani clothes, and yet on the other side of the street there was an obviously Western fashion conscious group of Asian and presumably Muslim boys. Such a juxtapositioning!

Interview Ten

The next appointment during the fieldwork in Bradford was with A. K.C.. on Wednesday 14th April. He has lived in Britain for 33 years. His origins are from Pakistan, but he was born and brought up in Kenya. Just recently he has taken early retirement from his job with the Local Education Authority. But he sees as his main task now the service of the Muslim community. This is something he regards as a duty. He is also concerned to try to make Islam understood by non-Muslims. He is involved with interfaith work. For him, living in a plural society is "brilliant, exciting and thrilling"! He also appreciates being with Muslims from different parts of the world. But he is annoyed with secularists and those with no faith...he thinks they are intellectually arrogant.

Some Muslims have adapted very well, and creatively to pluralism. Other have found it threatening, and have isolated themselves as a result. Many have not really engaged with people of other faiths (especially Christians) because they lack the linguistic skills to converse well enough).

To retain identity in Britain, Muslims must hold fast to the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah. But he felt that Bradford's Muslims have perhaps done particularly badly in settling into Britain. Some are even proud that they have not learnt English after 20 years here. This kind of attitude is a reflection of many factors, one of which is the kind of immigrants that came to Bradford..often uneducated, lacking social skills, and ability to adapt. Another prominent factor is the lack of inter-cultural skills on the part of the host community. Many Pakistanis may be better than the whites at this...but they lack linguistic capabilities (many took jobs in the mills etc., where English was not really required). Many Muslims also face racism.

He felt that it is very important for Muslim parents to take their Islamic duties seriously. And Muslims must engage with those working in education and other public services. He echoed many of my other interviewees...religious pluralism is not a real issue for Muslims...but atheism, and secular materialism is.

A.K.C. feels fortunate to be a Muslim. He does not feel a great sense of difference from Jews and Christians, but does feel very different from Hindus etc. As a Muslim he feels neither superior nor inferior, though he had grappled with some of the latter feelings when younger. For him, being engaged with interfaith work can affect identity...it can make one more concerned to learn about one's own faith, understand what it means to be a Muslim (through the questions of others), and it makes one challenge one's assumptions. Some issues of pluralism are important at grassroot level in the community. Some Muslim parents feel strongly that their children should not learn about Christianity in R.E. classes, nor go on visits to Churches. But such an attitude involves only a minority.

Being a minority faith in Britain, but still large, and with a high profile, is perhaps of more concern to non-Muslims than Muslims! He quoted to me the Irish saying "If I wanted to start, I wouldn't begin here"!

Turning to the subject of education, he noted that if the application for Voluntary Aided status for Islamia School is accepted, this would

be a big symbolic step towards tolerance of Muslims in Britain (even though the number of children involved is so small...120, compared to 85,000 Muslim children in Bradford alone).

Being in Britain does not involve, for him, a reinterpretation of Islam...but age and maturity requires fresh appreciation of the sources of Islam. He told me that there is only one mosque out of the 45 in Bradford, where women can offer their prayer. He thinks that women and girls will become dissatisfied with this, and start to challenge the community.

He would advise young Muslims who are interested in other faiths to enjoy the diversity, learn from it etc. Secularism is having an "enormous" impact on Muslims in Britain.

We finished by talking of the Panorama programme. He said that it was a "hatchet job" made more for the benefit of the makers, than viewers. None of it was inaccurate, but it painted the worst picture possible. It was an extreme view, and completely imbalanced. It didn't serve any purpose.

He feels that the future of Islam in Britain is in the hands of the host community.

Interview Eleven

My first appointment today (15/4/93) was with I.F.I. who works in the media. She is aged 26. She gave me some real insider insights into the going's on within the Muslim community in Bradford, especially from the youth perspective.

We talked a little about dress. She suggested that most young Muslims feel comfy in all styles of clothes. Talking personally, she said that although she is a nominal Muslim (she doesn't pray regularly or fast properly) it is important for her to be able to call herself a Muslim. She suggested that many other Muslim youth only go to the mosque at Eid.

If asked who she is (ie. as a question of identity), she felt her responses depended on the situation. She would offer one identity if her mother was present, and another if a friend was asking. She suggested that Muslim identity was conferred by upbringing. Although she knows little about Islam, and has rarely questioned it, when a child she wanted Qur'an reading to be in English. She felt that many Muslim parents fail to understand the very different network of friendships and relationships that youth in this country have compared to what their parents had.

She said how at school she had wanted so very much to be white. But she suggested that Muslim youth now are more confident of their identity...while their parents are still frightened of threats to their own Muslim/Pakistani identity.

She, like many other young people, feels a sense of compromise in her life. She knows she can't drink, then pray. But she felt strongly that it would be impossible for her to marry a non-Muslim, marry in a church, and so on. "I wouldn't feel married". (I got the impression that for many young Muslims like I.F.I., Islam is used for identity-construction, even though they may be non-practising).

I.F.I. said she wanted very much to be able to divide religion from culture. She finds the oppression of the latter hard. When I tried to suggest that something of an Islamic spiritual revival might be taking place among Muslim youth, she too was aware of organizations such as 'Young Muslims', and their popularity.

The Muslim community in Bradford she said, is traditional and very cultural in its attitudes and behaviour. She said it was not uncommon for Muslim girls to be sent back to Pakistan at the age of twelve or so, to have them married out there, then once they're pregnant, sending them back to Britain. She commented that Muslim girls joke about their husbands' origins..."is he *imported* or local!"

With regard to the Panorama programme, she said that a petition of 3,000 names had been sent to the BBC, plus a threat to sue.

The direction of the conversation changed frequently from personal comments, to observations of the community generally. It was hard to take notes with such changes in subject.

I.F.I. talked at length of the many problems in the Muslim community on marriage issues...girls running away from home, parents keeping girls locked in at home, and so on. Even men feel pushed into arranged marriages, but for them it is easier if things are not working. She said she knew many men who, though claiming to be Muslim, were having affairs. But "people don't grass on them"!

We talked about the Council for Mosques, since I was interested to know how it is viewed in the local press. She said that in general it is not seen particularly positively....the only people that see it as a useful organisation are men worried about or threatened by women! "It doesn't represent me", she said. It does nothing for women.

Much of the conversation was about her own life history. It was certainly a very open discussion. I gained a lot of insights into the realities rather than ideals of Bradford Muslims. I heard an unrepeatable amount of gossip.

Interview Twelve

My next appointment of the day (15/4/93) was with a representative of the Bradford Council for Mosques. L.H. has been in Britain since 1965, arriving here at the age of 14. He appreciates that there are some benefits in living in a liberal society...but also drawbacks, such as not being treated equally by government institutions. He felt that Britain is a Christian country (though nominal), with Christian traditions. It was hard for it to change in the 1960's to being a multi-faith society.

He has been involved in various community organizations. Earlier in the community's history, activism was geared towards provision of basic facilities. Now there are new needs...the main thing being the

education of the young. This is essential in a liberal society, so that the religious identity of parents is passed onto children.

The Muslim community is one of prescribed values and beliefs. Many of these values and beliefs contradict those of British culture. Numerous institutions undermine Muslim values. What effect does this have on identity? It reinforces the Muslim's sense of being in the minority. This presents a challenge. How can values be protected in such an environment, in practical ways? This is not easy, and especially for a community that is unorganized to act quickly. This is mainly an educational failure.

L.H. spoke of the deep influence that the values of the school environment have on young Muslims. It is hard to tell who wins the battle...the religious instruction in *madrassah* or the 'secular' teaching of the school. In some areas, identity is strong...family values, *zakat*, and fasting are examples; but practice of *salat* is weaker. He suggested that out of the various Islamic influences on a Muslim - school, family, community, and mosque - the family is strongest.

He has seen that those Muslims who try to break with the Asian community never be fully accepted by the white community. They are still always outsiders to some extent. The problems such individuals face are a deterrent to others thinking of breaking from their family and cultural ties. I was surprised to learn that only about 20% of Bradford's young Muslims attend a *madrassah* (20,000 Muslims in state schools - only 8,000 or so going to supplementary schools). It remains to be seen what identity choices those still in school will make.

He stressed the importance of the family in passing on to children a sense of who they are. Mosques simply reinforce that identity. He said that many Muslims are concerned that they are not given equality of opportunity in terms of opportunities for advancement (is this really the case?). In practicing Islam, Muslims have more protection and freedom in an Islamic country. But the totalitarian governments in some Muslim countries put British Muslims off going

to live in them. They have come to appreciate democracy and individual freedoms in this country.

Religious pluralism is not a concern for Muslims in Britain, but other ideologies are more challenging. These ideologies (eg. of liberalism) give freedom, but not protection for Muslim values. Wanting to be Muslim can be problematic for some, especially in matters of dress. It may be easier to wear a bikini rather than hijab in this country. And the former is encouraged much more than the latter by the media!

He does feel a sense of difference from the majority community....though there are some common values; in general Muslims behave very differently when it comes to family, dietary, marital and social customs. The extended family is very important to Muslims living as a minority...especially at times of crisis. Education is critical for identity. But he felt some concern that Muslim children of primary school age attend R.E. lessons. They may learn stories from other traditions, and become confused with their own.

He said that most Muslims do not feel threatened by Christian beliefs; many find them too complicated to be attractive...especially the Trinity! But they may well be threatened by other ideologies. The *Qur'an* recognises the human tendency towards pleasure that may be sinful according to Islam. These must be controlled by religious practices, but in an atmosphere of liberalism, many of these pleasures are actively encouraged.

The community is showing sign of cracking under these pressures. The question remains...can it be contained by the third generation? Certain events revive Muslim identity...many youth were stirred by the Rushdie affair. He suggested that the Bradford community in general is not very religious....and not good at practicing Islam. But he felt that this is a worldwide problem. Muslims are not taking religious seriously, except at times of crisis. The concept of *niyyah* is lost its breadth. Muslims in Britain (and elsewhere?) no longer see work, for example, as a form of worship, but simply as an economic necessity. Islam has been reduced in some cases to poor practice of

the five pillars. Muslim organizations are looking out towards to community, but the latter are not interested, apparently.

The Panorama programme started debate he said, on issues that the community was aware of beforehand. His concern with the programme was that it put the blame for the problems on the fact that the community is Muslim. "Children are under-achieving because they are Muslim". He said that Sufis seem to be the true 'fundamentalists', and the one's who appear to be living successfully in minority situations.

Muslim communities can change very quickly. The West, he suggested, is frightened by the possibility of overnight upheavals. He told me about a mosque administrator in Bradford who said that prejudice by the white community in this country will be the factor that reinforces/retains Muslim identity. Islam is a religion of practice..it is not meant to be a burden, he said.

Interview Thirteen

The final interview today (14/4/93) was with I.A. He came to the U.K. in 1967 at the age of ten, and went through school and college in the 1970's. He has been exposed to many communities, having been engaged in small group work, wide-ranging self-help groups, and racial issues. He felt that at this time there was already plenty of provision for the religious needs of the community, but not enough for wider, social needs. So, taking a wider perspective, he sought to provide opportunities for women's recreation, for example, and various counselling facilities. He also noted little activities for youth, so he helped set up the Asian Youth Movement.

These developments were important...they showed that the community was now starting to voice aspirations, looking at itself in the future and present tense (early 1980's). In the 1982-85 period, Bradford was at the forefront of educational issues...dealing with language, *halal* meat provision, ethos of schooling, and so on. Prior to 1978, the community had kept itself to itself, but now it took the LEA by surprise. All these concerns are very much to do with identity and

self-assertion in the community. It was wanting to be recognised as having a distinct identity with a set of values. The 'true position' of being a minority...asserting its identity in a positive way without encroaching on the identity of others was being aimed for.

A Muslim identity has many demands upon it; for him personally this has meant juggling between:

- 1) parental heritage
- 2) Pakistani identity...this cannot be swept aside, and he tries to remain true to this identity.
- 3) identity conferred during the past 26 years in Britain. He is aware of being rooted in Britain, and as having a variety of non-Muslim friends.
- 4) He is a member of a struggling minority Muslim community, and a minority has its own psychology. So this social reality is part of his identity.
- 5) He is part of an international *ummah*.

All these demands on identity are like various strings pulling one in various directions. He said that he felt this kind of self-perception is typical of many second generation Muslims. He noted that various aspects of this "multi-dimensional identity take over in various circumstances". But balancing them all is a painful dilemma.

He felt that Muslims in Britain have not come to a consensus on what the constituent ingredients of identity are. What should be given up or let go of to maintain a true Muslim identity? On what issues can there be compromise? There is now debate going on with regard to a whole range of practical matters among most Muslims. Identity issues are often very concrete for youth...they are less theoretical or da'wah orientated. They are asking "if I have a Sikh friend/eat with a Hindu/visit a Church/date a non-Muslim, do I stop becoming Muslim?" But quality of life issues are perhaps uppermost in the minds of many young Muslims..."will I get a job next week?" The youth are perhaps not concerned with heavy theology, rather debate, at school perhaps, on visible things such as *hijab* for women. Debate and discussion is thus happening in unstructured, ad hoc, haphazard

ways, often between friends. (Are mosques too frightened to delve into these issues for fear of what they might find out?)

It appears that many Muslim youth see no contradiction between their Muslim identity and, say, going to pubs. It is only a minority that are engaged in strict Islam. But there seems to be something that pulls many Muslim youth, however secularized, back to their religious identity. Many who had not recently set foot in a mosque were out campaigning in the wake of the Rushdie affair. But it is clear that the attitude of youth to religion is very different from their parents, simply because of their upbringing in Britain.

It is up to youth to decide whether Islam is relevant to them. Much depends on Islamic institutions for this, but currently they do not seem to be succeeding. Muslim organizations must help youth to answer the question "who am I?"

Religious pluralism is an issue for Muslims in Britain when events further afield arise. The events in India earlier this year caused some Hindu-Muslim conflicts in Britain, with some temples being attacked. In such circumstances, the value of pluralism may be questioned. In Britain at the time of the burning of the Satanic Verses, differences of principle between Christians and Muslims were evident. Christians could sympathize, but not support the fatwa, nor condone the book burning. Muslims must decide if the Church in this country is on its side...

I.A. offered a superb definition of pluralism "walking tall in one's own tradition" without having to agree with others. He suggested that there needs to be serious study of the meaning of the *dhimmi* concept in the Qur'an. It must be evaluated in the light of the British Muslim experience.

He felt that many Muslim youth do feel comfy with their situation in Britain. Interestingly, he said that most youngsters would identify themselves as "British Muslims" rather than "British Pakistanis".

We finished by talking about the Panorama programme. He said that reaction had been negative, not because of what the programme said,

but how it said it. The producers failed to show the progress the community has made over the past 20 years. He said that the programme had exaggerated some things...for example, it made out that large numbers of parents take their children away to Pakistan. But many cannot afford to take such holidays! The programme has had a demoralizing effect on the community, but there has been fast reaction, and the network system put into effect quickly.

Interview Fourteen

After this period of fieldwork, two further interviews were arranged later on in the course of the research. The first of these took place on 4/6/93 with A.K.B., a Muslim who has been strongly involved with youth work in Britain, and who has many connections with communities.

He began by saying that there are many ideological 'isms' in the Muslim world as well as in the West. Muslims in the U.K. using what Britain has to offer to preserve their identity. When there is a clash between Islam and Western values, choices must be made, often with Islam being compromised. For example, a Muslim may take up an ethically unsuitable job.

The young have a more 'enthusiastic' approach in getting on with life with their own identity and dignity. Islam confers identity through naming. In his opinion there are some (5% approx.) who are consciously Muslim, the rest being nominally Muslim. Atheism is rare. For many Muslims, their Islam is private, eg., from their work life. Many want to get on in the secular state with a 'minimum' Islam. Many secularized youth think that Islam doesn't clash with modern life. For many of them it's a very general thing - a kind of common good, very flexible to the society around them. For many, their main concern is simply getting on with life!

There are generational differences in attitudes to Islam. Youngsters in Britain are freer from the cultural accretions of Islam from sub-continent. Islam in the U.K. will have different cultural (accretions) manifestations. Youth are trying to interpret Islam, according to its

roots, for the British context. Many are trying to overcome the sectarian biases of Islam.

Religious leaders and imams are the most concerned with liberalism etc., and many of them feel threatened by it. The majority of the community take ideological pluralism for granted, living with it and operating within its sphere. Some members of the community want to encapsulate themselves and be over-cautious/over-protective of youth. Much of this due to ignorance of Islam on the part of parents. Roughly 30% of young Muslim women are mixing freely with host society....accommodating completely to its values.

Interview Fifteen

The final interview comprising this thesis took place on 18/5/94 with K.S. By the time this interview took place, the research had significantly developed conceptually since the earlier interviews. By the time this final interview was conducted, the author felt that a somewhat different questionnaire should be used to reflect the developments of the research. Thus a new questionnaire was devised which simply developed some of the earlier questions.

For K.S., it is hard to "compartmentalize identity", and it should be viewed in a wholistic way. In his opinion, Islam encourages *individual* identity.

He regarded Britain as an "oppressive society for Muslims" (he quoted some unemployment figures), and an essentially "closed" one. It is not liberal. This is the realization of some members of the first generation of Muslim immigrants...that Britain is not all that they initially expected of it. Where the government talks of 'integration', it really mean 'assimilation'. He proposed that the Muslim community must "rise up socially".

He felt that minority status is having an effect on identity by "consolidating it". There is a realization by many that this identity is the basis for the long-term survival of the community.

He welcomed the possibility of closer relationships between Christians and Jews, and co-operation on moral campaigns.

K.S. admitted that many young Muslims show signs of "drifting" away from Islam, but this is only temporary. They will come back as more and more of the Pakistani 'clothing' of Islam disappears. He noted that especially after the age of 25, this return to Islam is evident. Women especially are looking for Islamic marriage partners. The current success and appeal of Hizb-ut-Tahrir also points to the success of Islam in Britain that K.S. anticipates. But he regards this organisation as simply a "futuology" that is over-simple and not really tackling current issues. The return to Islam can also be seen as a "revolt against a closed society", with Islamic ideals giving the freedom that young Muslims are looking for. It also offers them a "world-platform", breaking down barriers. He foresees a prosperous, hard-working, and educated community.

There need to be practical developments within the community. One of these is that multiple occupation of homes by several generations must recede. Another issue on which the community must work is education...there are still not enough young Muslims going on into further education in particular.

A 'British Muslim identity' is an acceptable goal to work towards, but K.S. is keen to question that assumptions that lie behind the efforts of those who call for this kind of identity.

FIELDWORK QUESTIONNAIRE - 2

- 1) What significant social changes have taken place within the Muslim community over the last 20 years?
- 2) What do you feel is the most important aspect of religious identity for a Muslim and how best can Muslims retain this sense of identity in Britain?
- 3) What effect has being in a minority had on the religious identity of Muslims in Britain?
- 4) What impact do you think that secularism, liberalism and individualism, to name a few 'Western' ideologies, are having on the British Muslim community and on individual Muslims?
- 5) What relationship would you like to see develop between the Muslim community and other faith groups in Britain, especially the Christians?
- 6) What prospects do you foresee for the future development of the community, especially within the second and third generations?
- 7) What role do you feel that the Muslim Parliament plays in the community?
- 8) Do you feel that the Parliament has come to have a truly representative role for the British Muslim community?
- 9) What are the most pressing needs for the Muslim community as a whole?
- 10) How do you respond to the calls of some young Muslims that a specifically *British* Muslim identity should be developed?
- 11) Various models could describe the relationship between Muslims and the wider society, such as integration, or assimilation, or isolation. Which, if any of these do you feel the community should be working towards, and how can this aim be met?
- 12) In what sense, if at all, do you feel that the third generation Muslim will be different from their second and first generation predecessors in terms of religious identity?

APPENDIX TWO

FIELDWORK REPORTS (PAKISTAN)

Report of Study Tour in Pakistan
November 1993 - Submitted to the Spalding Trust

Through arrangements made with the Institute of Policy Studies in Islamabad, my visit to Pakistan afforded opportunities for travel to a number of both rural and urban areas. Throughout the four weeks of my trip, I was staying exclusively in family homes. This allowed me to gain numerous insights of great value to my research.

1-7 November: During the first week, I was based in Islamabad. Visits were arranged to the International Islamic University; the Shah Faizal Mosque; and two days were spent in Azad Kashmir, near Mirpur.

7-15 November : The second week of my stay was in Lahore. Here I had the opportunity to visit a number of educational and training institutions; rural villages; and local historic sites.

15-19 November : From Lahore, I travelled on to Karachi. Here I visited the University where I was able to conduct interviews with both students and lecturers about the religious and social life of Pakistan. I was put into contact with a number of individuals who had lived for a long period of time in Britain. With them, I could gain some impression of their different experiences of living in Pakistan and Britain.

19-24 November : I spent my last days in Pakistan back in Lahore. I had made contact with a number of people during my previous visit who could take me to the rural areas. In particular I was able to go to some of the villages from which Pakistani Muslims migrated to Britain back in the 1960's and 1970's.

At many stages of my trip, I gained an understanding of Islam and Pakistan that will add enormous value to my doctoral research. During my stay in the rural areas of Mirpur, I met a number of 'split families' where one half of the family have moved to Britain (especially Bradford), and the other half have stayed on in the village. Interviews with a number of individuals who 'commute' between these two different environments helped me to gain a deeper

understanding of the difficulties of living as a Muslim in Britain, as opposed to an Islamic country like Pakistan. For me to have access to rural areas was of paramount importance for my research: the original Pakistani Muslims in Britain were largely uneducated rural villagers from poor areas. Understanding of Islam in these villages is still minimal (due to lack of education and illiteracy) and is largely based on information passed down from father-to-son. This kind of transmission of religious knowledge is no longer proving viable or relevant for the young generations of Pakistani Muslims who have been born and educated in Britain.

Having now lived alongside a number of Pakistani families in a Muslim country, I now realize how many points of clash there are between Islam and the West. I can empathize much more with the younger generations of Pakistani Muslims living in Britain who are trying to assert their religious identity in a society marked by ideological pluralism. It is now important for them to successfully ascertain the differences between tradition, culture, and Islam. Many are trying to work out what the 'core elements' of Islam are. Through the migration of their parents and grandparents, the young generation have had their relationship to a cultural past broken. They cannot hope to be Pakistani Muslims: only Britain Muslims. In discovering this identity, and struggling against the pressures upon it, they will not doubt find their niche in Western society. I feel that the elder members of the Muslim community in Britain must not worry about their young losing their cultural identity. It is their religious identity as Muslims that must be discovered and preserved.

My experiences in Pakistan have greatly enhanced my understanding of the Muslim community in Britain. Somehow it was my spatial distance from Britain during my trip that threw the Muslims living here into much sharper focus. During my visit, I made many new friends and contacts who will be of great value to my later academic career. Thus the fruits of this trip will have far-reaching benefits extending beyond my current research. I will always be indebted to the generous sponsorship of the Spalding Trust for enabling me to have such a fascinating and worthwhile experience.

PAKISTAN REPORTInterview One

The first interview was conducted with Z.A. at the International Islamic University in Islamabad. He is widely travelled, and has also spent time in Britain. He noted his perception of the difficulty for Muslims in Britain to ascribe to themselves a positive identity given the discrimination that exists. This does not lessen their pride in Islam, but rather with their own identity. He contrasted the identity situation of young Pakistanis living in Britain and in Pakistan: for the former, their identity has to be "worked for", and can not be "taken-for-granted" like the latter. The social structures exist in Pakistan for a young person to be aware of their religious identity. But this is linked to class, he said. Strict practice of Islam in Pakistan is particularly a "middle class" phenomenon; the elites in the country are more 'secularized'.

Z.A. regarded the atmosphere of British society as "alien" for many Muslims living there. There are many points of clash between Muslim and non-Muslim values. This gulf is not so wide in Pakistan. He noted the strength of family life in Pakistan, and a sense in which here people "belong to each other", integrating them into a strong unit.

He regarded the unemployment of many young Muslims in Britain as a factor which has thrown their identity into sharper focus. Whereas their parents and grandparents enjoyed the benefits of full employment, with the current shortage of jobs for the young, discrimination is likely to occur.

Interview Two

During the second day of fieldwork, I met Dr. A. - a lecturer in Comparative Religion at the International Islamic University. He began by noting the freedom that many Muslims in minority situations enjoy, especially when they are in liberal/secular societies. The downside of this is that the political side of Islamic law cannot often be implemented. He talked at some length about the "spirit of Islam"

that must be preserved by minorities; they are the building blocks of identity for a Muslim...*tawhid* (Oneness of Allah), and *ibadah* (worship).

Interview Three

Spent some time at the Women's Campus of the International Islamic University. Here I met Dr. F.N.H. who lived and studied in Birmingham before becoming head of the Women's Campus. She noted some of her perceptions of British Muslims...lack of education, particularly on religious matters. For many first generation immigrants to Britain, "culture overrides religion", and many tried to impose this on their children. This has led to a "communication and generation gap". Racism is a problem for British Muslims...and it can lead to a "lack of pride in one's background". She noted how much she had learnt about Pakistan (especially rural dwellers) from her time in Britain!

After even only a few days in Pakistan I began to appreciate why so many parts of Bradford appear as they do. The time I spent in April walking round Lumb Lane and Manningham now show so many signs of connection with the sights I am seeing here. It is as if parts of Pakistan have been picked up, moved eight thousand miles, and set down in Bradford. Living with families has also been useful...I can now understand better the psychology of the extended family system, and the dynamics of 'chain migration' to Britain. Because of the joint family system, there is a further variable on identity that must be taken into account. Many British Muslims from Pakistan have strong connections with those parts of their family who have remained in Pakistan. These individuals from the 'sending society' will have an effect on their relatives abroad in Britain. It seems as though many of the first generation immigrants to the U.K. are only Muslim by birth...not by choice. What of their children?

During my first week in Pakistan, a trip to Mirpur in Azad Kashmir was arranged. It is from this area that many Muslims in

Bradford/Northern England have their origins. With the family I was staying with (they had lived in Britain for fourteen years, and one of the daughters was still living there) I was able to learn much about their experiences of life in Britain. During my stay, visits to rural areas were arranged. I visited a small village school, a mosque, and several homes in the villages. For the first time, I was able to appreciate something of the culture shock the early migrants from Mirpur in the 1960's must have faced when they arrived in Britain. They moved from not only a different country, but also from a rural to an urban environment. Strangely, the great spatial distance from Britain while I was in Pakistan that threw the Muslim community living back in the U.K. into much sharper focus. During the visit to rural villages, I met R.I., (she is aged 22) from Stoke-on-Trent who has married into one of the families in the village. She told me much about her life in Britain, and her feelings at spending holidays in Pakistan. She noted how much of a secularizing impact the media is having on rural communities in the village. Also, it was apparent as I visited different homes which one's have relatives living in Britain. Those with family in the U.K. tended to have more material goods...televisions, fridges, and so on. R.I. & I swapped addresses, and I hope to visit her again once we are both back in Britain.

There seems to be quite a contrast between the kind of Islam practiced in rural areas compared to the cities. In the former situation, it appears more "tradition-orientated", and less strictly observed. Religious knowledge is passed from father-to-son; it is not being taught in schools. Illiteracy in rural areas is extremely high, and in the country generally, only 24% approximately can read or write. This figure is much lower among women. Shrines are very popular among rural dwellers. It was beginning to seem apparent that Pakistani Muslims in Britain resemble in many ways Muslims living in Pakistan itself, except in microcosm. The majority want to be able to call themselves 'Muslim', but only for a minority is this translated into sincere and wholehearted *practice* of Islam (ie.regular *salat*).

The second part of my time in Pakistan was spent in Lahore. During the first week I went to visit the headquarters of the *Jamaat-i-Islami*

for the day. I met Naem Siddiqui - a co-founder of the Party with Maulana Maududi. Most of the day was spent with A.R.Q. who is involved with public relations for the Party. As he explained the ethos of the institution, I began to understand better the *raison d'etre* of the Islamic Foundation and U.K. Islamic Mission which are inherently bound up with the *Jamaat*, though they are not formally connected.

A.R.Q. has spent time in Britain, and he expressed his opinions about the early migrants, as people who were "unaware of their identity", but who tried to preserve outward, cultural manifestations of it. They were in most cases completely unaware of the culture of the West to which they were migrating. For Pakistanis, their identity as Muslims is implicit, though it may not be fully understood or acted upon.

Interview Four

During a visit to the University of the Punjab, I met M.S.A. who completed a Master's Degree on the education of young Muslims in Britain from Newcastle University in 1991. During the course of his time in Britain, he was closely connected to many youth organizations, and many of his experiences and observations are of great value to my research. He outlined some of the priorities that he perceived among British Muslims: a) more teaching of Islam at school b) greater provision of religious facilities in schools...ie. a room in which to pray, *halal* food c) allowances regarding school uniform so that girls can keep legs covered d) exemption of Muslim pupils from music and dancing lessons.

He noted that many of the younger generation of Muslims are influenced by secular culture, yet they are "still wanting to call themselves Muslim". This is not however particular to Muslims in Britain. He regards many of the younger generation in Pakistan as influenced by a global secular culture which between the ages of 16-25 approximately often draws them away from religion. After this age, they become "more conscious of Islamic identity".

Towards the end of my week in Lahore, an opportunity to visit rural villages was arranged. I was so interested and absorbed by all that I saw...design and decoration of homes, furniture, religious artefacts, assessing the impact of 'Westernization', farming methods, family structure. All these things were helping me to build up some kind of impressions of the values, customs and traditions that organise rural life...some of which will have been brought to Britain by the first generation of immigrants. Islam is in many ways quite 'visible' here. Some road signs carry religious messages such as *Allah-u-Akbar* or *Alhamdulillah*. Similarly, the national television network 'STN' there are a few minutes before transmission in which *surah's* are recited, and various mosques throughout the world are shown.

During the week in Lahore I visited the International *Tablighi Jama'at* conference. This was of interest in itself, but was especially interesting to attend due to the presence of this organization in Bury, in the North of England. There were some British Muslims from Bury attending the conference. Apart from the handful of local village women around selling fruit and so on, I was in a minority of about one in a million. The atmosphere did not welcome me, and I felt very out of place. The atmosphere was very powerful.

After conducting fieldwork in Lahore and villages in the Punjab, I went to Karachi. In terms of meeting people who were useful to my research, my time here was extremely fruitful.

Interview Five

On my first day in Karachi I met F.A., a girl aged 27, who had spent the first 17 years of her life in Newcastle-upon-Tyne before coming to live in Pakistan. She told me much about her upbringing, and developing religious identity over the course of her life. She described her religious education as consisting of attendance at a *madrassah*, which taught her how to read the Qur'an...but she felt this had been inadequate since she was not taught the meanings. Her family were "not particularly religious", and the only time her

father attended the mosque was for *Jama'ah* prayers on Fridays. Her parents had emphasized the division of *halal* and *haram*.

She spoke of wanting to be more like her British friends in terms of dress so that she could "blend in with the environment"; this contrasted with her sisters who felt happier in *shalwar kameez*. But often F.A. felt "like a misfit" in British society. Islam became important to her after a visit to Saudi Arabia to see her father who had a job there. After this experience, she decided to move back to Pakistan from where her parents had originally migrated. Though preferring to live in an 'Islamic country', she nonetheless enjoys being in Britain, and finds it easy to practice Islam. She said that in Britain "you know you're different" and this makes things easier, though it does put pressure on identity. The difference between right and wrong is often clearer, compared to Pakistan where religious life and rules are ambiguous...in many ways the country is trying to emulate the West. She found the issue of identity difficult in Britain. "It's hard to know what to label yourself...Pakistani, Muslim or British". Regarding *hijab* she found this offered protection from racism; it clearly indicated a religious commitment which she felt was respected by the wider society. Racism, she said, was perhaps more of a problem for those who try to dress or 'appear' British.

She offered some general impressions of the young generations in Britain. In particular, she felt that the issue of *halal* food is not a major concern for them, and on the occasions she goes back to Newcastle, she observes worsening moral standards among young Pakistanis, especially among boys who have a much freer upbringing than girls and who as a consequence are less religious in her opinion.

Interview Six

At the University of Karachi I met Dr. M.A.S.S. from the Islamic Studies department. He has spent several years in Britain and knows my research supervisor. Our conversation was fairly general, though much of it revolved around the notion of identity. He suggested that Muslims in Britain are more consciously trying to preserve their

religious identity compared to Muslims in Pakistan. The latter take it for granted that they belong to Islam. British Muslims become "especially aware of their identity when it is attacked in some way". He regards the community as being at a transitory phase...not yet fully merged into British society, nor fully removed from Pakistani customs.

Interview Seven

The final interview conducted in Karachi was with the Head of the Psychology Department at the University. Most of the discussion centred around the notion of immigrant identity.

He began by saying that there is a clear difference in thinking patterns between the first and subsequent generations of British Muslims. The initial migrants were "dogmatic" with regard to religion whereas the third generations have been influenced by Western thought (through schools) and approach the matter with more of a "logical" attitude. Early migrants spent much of their time working, often ignoring the religious education of their children.

For young Muslims of Pakistani origin living in Britain, their "relationship to the past has been broken". As a consequence they are likely to have less respect for "Pakistani customs", especially if they have never visited Pakistan. A split identity is a likely outcome from living one kind of life at home with parents, and being someone different outside of the home. The whole minority experience can be one of "insecurity".

Between myself and the co-ordinator of my fieldwork in Karachi, it was decided to cut short my time there and return back to Lahore/Punjab. In this area I have better access to rural village communities from which migration to Britain took place. For the second period of my fieldwork in Lahore I was based at the home of K.M. and his family, all of whom have lived for long periods of time in Britain/U.S.A., and are closely connected to the *Jamaat-i-Islami*.

Whilst staying at their home, I was able to talk with K.M.. He suggested that the model of relationship between Muslims and British society that should be aimed for was one of "integration" rather than assimilation. Integration for him meant "living in harmony with the society and contributing to it on issues of common agreement". For him, the foundation of Muslim religious identity is *tawhid*.

Simply by spending time in Pakistan, the fact that Islam is part and parcel of life became particularly clear. The extended family system is the bedrock of communal life; Islam is constantly affirmed by the family and society at large. But there is a difference between Islam and Muslims. As someone said to me (T.G.K.) "Pakistan is not an Islamic country, but a country where Muslims live".



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